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THE STORY OF AN IRISH HOME THIRTY YEARS AGO.

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THIRTY YEARS AGO.

BY

ANNIE KEARY,

AUTHOR OF "OLDBURY," ETC.

"Whereas to the composition of novels and romances nothing is necessary but paper, pens, and ink, with the manual capacity of using them."—FIELDING.

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CASTLE DALY.

The Story of an Irish Home Thirty Years Ago.

CHAPTER I.

The longer life the more offence;
The more offence the greater pain;
The greater pain the worse defence;
The worse defence the lesser gain;
The loss of gain long ill doth try;
Therefore come death and let me die."

WYAT.

"I WONDER whether Ugolino's famine-tower had any windows in it," Ellen observed to Connor one morning, some months after these events, as they stood at the open door of the house at Eagle's Edge, once more watching Pelham's progress down the road on his daily ride.

"It was a very poor invention for a place of torture if it had not," Connor answered quickly. "Lord Clarendon and the English Government know much better how to build up a famine tower for the nation of Ugolinos they

are starving. To be walled in away from food, and famish, was just nothing; the real torture is, to stand out in the open, and see fields waving with corn, and cattle on all the hills, and to die in face of them, divided from them by invisible law-walls skilfully built up, which let sight and sound and smell through."

"I was thinking of windows with a more distant outlook," Ellen went on rather wearily, for during the two days that Connor had been home from Dublin she had discovered that listening to political harangues fom him, whether she assented to or disagreed from the opinions he enunciated, equally fretted the sore wounds in her heart. "I wish, dear Connor," she said, "that you would not always force me to turn my thoughts towards blaming other people, and longing for fierce remedies. You mesmerise me, while you talk, into feeling with you, and it is very terrible. I think the misery would be easier to bear if we laid some of the blame of it on ourselves, or called it, as the poor patient victims do, while they die under it, 'the hand of God.'"

"Some one said something like that to D'Arcy one day. I wonder what you would have thought if you had seen how angry he was. He called it blasphemy—speaking ill of God's name—attributing to Him unrighteousness and wrong."

"I know there is unrighteousness and wrong doing of men mixed up with the calamity, and that it need not have been so hopeless if it had been rightly met; but still I think the dying people see the furthest when they call it the hand of God, and feel no bitterness in lying under it. It is *that* to each one of them—the hand opening the way of escape from their fever beds—or if they are not to die bringing other good to them, if we could only see it."

"So long as such a doctrine does not induce people to sit still and be content to be crushed I have no objection to it. After all, it is only what D'Arcy himself says sometimes. He thinks that the stress of this misery, the horror bred by these last cruelties, which have left half the nation to perish through, neglect ann misgovernment, will draw our people together, and make us resolute in claiming the management of our own land for ourselves at least. 'Then,' he says, 'these three millions who have died already in the fomine will, in after days, be as certainly counted martyrs for the country as those others who have got to die yet in the battle-field for our independence, before it is won.' Looking at events in that light, I can see how good may come even out of the famine."

"But that is not my view—quite the contrary. I

understand why King David choose the pestilence, of the three evils offered to him, rather than that his army should flee before the enemy. I think with him, that anything is better than falling into the hands of man. Your hope is my terriblest fear, Connor, dear."

"Ah! you are getting corrupted. It is the abominable journal that comes to you from England with blue marks along the pages, to draw your attention to essays on Irish questions, full of counsels of cowardice and baseness, that is turning you sympathies the wrong way. You should stick to reading the *Nation*, and then you'd know the truth."

"I have not had an English paper with blue marks since the one I sent on to you to Dublin three weeks ago: the sender has forgotten me, or left off writing essays on Irish questions. The paper I received this morning came from Pelham Court, and the scored column contained an account of a public meeting at Fakenham, with Uncle Charles in the chair, whence a petition was sent up to Parliament for the repeal of the Maynooth Grant, as the most likely remedy for the Irish famine."

"Eh! kick the lion in the face, now that he is supposed to be dying, hard enough, and perhaps he will awake. I hope you mean to send the paper back with comments. Let me write them between the lines."

"No, no; there was a letter posted at the same time as the newspaper, with twenty pounds in it for my starving people. I can't send that back or insult the givers, Connor. Marmaduke has been sending me money all through the summer, ever since people in England began to realize what it was that was happening here. I do believe he must have done without some few comforts himself to help us—kid gloves, perhaps, or scent, or some luxury from one of his five meals a day."

"That is a great deal for an English Guardsman to sacrifice for Irish savages, whom he rather hopes to have a chance of knocking on the head some day soon; but don't believe in the disinterestedness of his conduct, Eileen bawn. By and by he'll come to you and say, 'Look here, to please you I have saved a hundred Irish paupers from dying of starvation, whom in my conscience I think had better have died, and now I expect you to pay me by giving me yourself for life. One hundred for one is generous measure.' He may not put it in those words—he would not know how to express himself so well—but you'll find that is about the gist of the matter with him."

"No I shall not—he understands me too well; and, as far as he knows how, he has been generous. I can't be

as bitter as you are, Con, for I know that there is real generosity and real help given to us, though it does not all reach those who want it most."

"Is it these generous acts that make the windows of your famine tower, then?"

"I was not thinking of them when I spoke; I was imagining ourselves living in a great famine-tower, as indeed we are, seeing the dying faces in it, and hearing the groans that fill it all day, and every now and then being obliged to climb up into a turret and look through a window, out on to a world where people are eating and drinking, and gossiping and dancing, and where our famine-tower is only one little dark spot on their distan horizon, that they can see when they try to look at it, but generally forget. The turret windows from which I am obliged to look out on such a world are letters like those that came for me this morning."

"Ah, I was intending to tell you I expected my share of one of them, unless I am mistaken in the handwriting."

"You had better let me come to that one by degrees for I doubt whether its contents will put you into a good humour for hearing the others."

"I am in no violent hurry. You had three letters this morning, had you not?"

"One was only from Cynthea O'Roone to ask me to

send her an embroidery pattern I promised her long ago. The O'Roone's are living near Westport now, and Cynthea says she and her sisters can never leave their own garden because of the state of the country, and that they generally sit at breakfast with their blinds down, not to see on the doorstep the dead bodies of the people who have crawled there in the night to die."

"So they want embroidery patterns to amuse them in the house? I wonder they don't go to Dublin or England to be further off."

"Their father has got one of the government relief appointments."

"Just the man for it. How I wish Pelham had not put himself into the category of intercepters of public bounty. I would rather starve."

"My dear, if Pelham did not work for us, and the Thornleys pay us rent for a house they don't care now to live in, we should all have starved long before this. Pelham does the work as well as such work can be done."

"And you don't shut yourself up and work worsted like Cynthea O'Roone. After all, I don't know what else *she* could do. Dublin is full of such people shutting themselves up, in one fashion or another, from the sight of the dead bodies. It all comes of the demoralization of the Union. If we were a true nation governing ourselves,

feeling we could help ourselves, one half of us would not have to shut ourselves up in order not to see the other half die under the clever management of a foreign government, whose chiefs secretly think that the land is well rid of us, and that the underground roads are the safest to banish by. Exiles can come back, but not dead men."

"I don't believe it has anything to do with governments. People show their true characters in times like these, and we have plenty of the nobler sort. Did you hear, by the way, that Father Peter is dead? Biddy O'Rea brought the news this morning. He gave away the last morsel of food he had in the house yesterday evening, and then lay down on his bed too tired to go to the public stores for more, and having no one to send, for his servant died last week of fever. When they came to him this morning he was dying—of a broken heart, he told them, that he could do no more for his people."

"That's what I complain of—that the best of us are dying of broken hearts instead of drawing together and finding something better to do. If the clergy were heart and soul with us against the Union; if they were more Irish than anything else——"

"They have got to be more Christian than anything else, and how can they counsel such bloodshed as must come before the revolution you are dreaming of can be

brought about? I did not mean to excite you to so much anger, Connor dear, by making you look through one of my windows into Cynthea O'Roone's miserable little worsted-working world. My other windows at least look out towards fresh air and sunshine, and real mirth and forgetfulness."

"English letters, of course."

"Yes; I have been hesitating whether to keep them to myself or not, and I have decided on trying their effect on you first, knowing you have a power of getting out of mortifications that Pelham lacks."

"Hum, I suppose *she* has written to tell you she is engaged. I suspected something of the kind when I saw the thick letter. What fool has she taken up with? One of the Pelham Court fools, I'll engage. Joy go with them. I've other things than love-making to occupy me this year."

"I am glad you can take it so. I am afraid it will go much harder with Pelham; but, Connor, your imagination has jumped too far. It does not amount to an announcement of an engagement. I have only hints, and the most significant don't come from Lesbia herself, but from the gentleman's family. It seems to be Marmaduke; so you see his charity at least is genuine, not a bribe, as you supposed. You must acquit him there."

"Marmaduke! Well, I used to think he was a mule, obstinate enough to get what he wanted; henceforth I write him down an ass."

"An ass for taking what you were dying to get a very little while ago?"

"I did not begin by being in love with Ellen Daly."

"Oh, Con, what a flatterer you are, making believe that you value me above Lesbia and her great fortune."

"Cupid has not a bandage thick enough to hide from me how you two compare together."

"I am glad you are so free of Cupid. If Pelham were the same I should say it was a very good arrangement. Lesbia is kindly welcome to Marmaduke, though the Pelham Court people will never believe I am not secretly mortified."

"The news comes from Pelham Court, then."

"Yes, it has been growing in Mary's and Louisa's letters all the summer, and now it is full blown. The Pelhams spent the spring in London, and began to make much of Lesbia as soon as she arrived there. Lady Pelham presented her at the last drawing-room. She had some difficulty in persuading Mr. Thornley to think it necessary, but at last he consented, and the letter I had from Lesbia on the occasion was a window into another world indeed. It reached me just when cousin Anne was in the worst

of the fever. I carried it about in my pockets for days, thinking I would administer it to Pelham as an anti-love potion, but I never had the heart. There is a dreadful look of heartache in his face always, now. He is different from you, Connor. He feels the misery he sees round him horribly, but he does not believe in the possibility of washing it out in blood. I could not give him a side blow just then. After all, there was nothing really heartless in Lesbia's being pleased with her pearls and her conquests, only it was perhaps a bad time to write about them to us."

"Other conquests besides Marmaduke?"

"Yes, there was a baronet refused."

"I should have thought he would have done better than Marmaduke, having a title to begin with."

"She did not take him, however; and it is possible the Pelhams may be deceiving themselves. Lesbia's letter is certainly very full of 'your cousin Marmaduke,' but there is a sentence at the end about Whitecliffe that I cannot fancy a new lover greatly liking to read."

"Where is she now?"

"On a visit to Pelham Court with her brother and sister. Both my letters of this morning date from Pelham Court, and are full of descriptions of picnics and shooting parties. I won't inflict it all on you, but you must hear

one sentence from Mary Pelham's epistle, it is so characteristic—listen. 'I don't know, dearest Ellen, when we have had such a jolly autumn as we are having this year Since our cousins John Thornley and Lesbia Maynard came to us, it has been quite delightful. Duke said the other day it put him in mind of the time when you all came from Ireland and spent an autumn with us, for we are making just the same excursions to show the country to Lesbia that we made then for your benefit. Lesbia is a dear little thing, and we are all immensely taken with her. I think I told you in my last letter how well she and Duke get on together; it is quite a joke, in all our little excursions, how those two are invariably found side by side, and how they forget to look at the landscapes we have come to see, they are so absorbed in each other's conversation. I am sure, dear Ellen, that you will not feel hurt at my saying that we sisters think all the better of her for being able to appreciate dear Duke. She never complains of being dull in his company—indeed, she could not well do so, for he is in delightful spirits again now; and we all so enjoy seeing him happy. Mamma and I often say to each other that the events of this year ought to teach us how wrong it is to grieve when disappointments come to good people like Marmaduke; one may be always sure that something much better than what

they had wished for is in store for them.' There now, is not that well put? Should you have given Mary Pelham credit for being able to concoct such a pointed sentence?"

"The nasty little spiteful cat! I am right glad to remember that I never lost an opportunity of aggravating her when I was with her. It was time well spent."

"All the letter is not as bad as that sentence; there is a good deal of sympathy squeezed into the crossing, and, as I told you, twenty pounds from Uncle Charles. It will go a great way in buying comforts for the fever-stricken."

"We should not need to be fed by charity if we could keep what belongs to us—keep our own corn and cattle from being carried off to England to pay absentee rents."

"Don't look at them. As you said yourself, we are divided from that food by law-walls. I think you had better draw down the blinds of your famine-tower, and never look from its windows. I can't believe that stealing would be less degrading than begging."

"Call it seizing by right of the sword; and you are a false O'Flaherty if you flinch from it."

"I will tell you a thought I do flinch from, Connor. It is this, that you and I have no right to complain if our friends are 'piping while we are mourning.' It is our own

doing; we just drove those away from us who could best have helped us."

"You want to whistle old Duke back, eh? I believe he'd come, and leave Lesbia for Pelham and me to fight for if you were but to lift your little finger."

"No, no. I was not thinking of anything so personal, but I do often contrast in my mind our present solitude with the help we had last winter. It is not want of money that troubles me most; it is forethought and energy to meet emergencies we fail in, and Bride Thornley's brains were worth ten relief committees. Pelham and I grieve over the mismanagement we see, but single-handed we are not strong enough to set it right. People round us are dying, as Father Peter died this morning, wearied out with the sheer difficulty of getting help, while all the time help is near. I don't believe his heart would have broken if the Thornleys had been at the Castle still, and I can't bear to think that we drove them away."

"Say that I drove them away and you'll speak truth. *You* have nothing to blame yourself for."

"Do you never think that secrets are a burden, Con? Have you no compassion in laying them on me?"

"Not an inch. It is the women's part in a rising. Don't you suppose there are always millions of women's hearts burdened before any great outbreak of patriotism in

a prostrate nation can arise? You'll be proud of the trust one day."

"I doubt it. Nothing but harm has come of your secrets and mine hitherto. Connor, I dread telling Pelham about Lesbia because I know he cannot help feeling that butfor us she would have remained in Ireland, and perhaps never fallen in with Duke at all. We seemed fated to separate Pelham from all he cares for."

"He had his chance in the winter, and has not half so much to complain of as I, who really was in great favour with that little flirt once upon a time. No, I don't pity him, and I don't regret my own work. Let the consequences be what they may, I shall always plume myself on my presence of mind in tearing up those papers that night. You must acknowledge yourself that the lesson I gave John Thornley was effectual. There were no sneers or ridicule of D'Arcy in his essay on young Ireland's poetry, when it came out at last. I took the *Quarterly* you sent straight to D'Arcy, and we read the review together; and he pronounced it the most generous appreciation of our powers that a non-sympathiser could possibly give. I felt proud that my promptitude had borne such fruit."

"Did you? but it might have been the other way; now I read on and on in wonder. I certainly did not expect such a generous return to our insult; it weighs me down.

I don't know how to bear it. He did not even withdraw his favourable opinion of your poems. He expressed it more fully and respectfully than he had done in his first essay; and the warning words at the end, where the reviewer entreats the gifted young men whose writings he has been analyzing, not to throw away their lives—I thought they seemed to come from his heart—as if a brother had written them to brothers."

"Ah, he looks a little farther ahead than most people, that's all. He sees there's danger in us, and acts on Dan O'Connell's maxim—that a spoonful of treacle draws more flies than a barrel of vinegar. I daresay they make a great deal of John Thornley now at Pelham Court. He is getting a grand reputation as a writer, and it must be a new sensation to the Pelhams to count a literary lion among their kindred."

"He was always a favourite with Uncle Charles. He took his sisters down to Norfolk, but I don't gather from Lesbia's letter that he is staying there still. Would you like to read her letter while I go in to mamma?"

"No, thank you; I'm in no need of an anti-love potion from the future Mrs. Marmaduke—keep it for Pelham."

Ellen left Connor with his arms folded across the top of the gate, to smoke his cigar, and stare across the bog into the dancing heat mist of the glowing August day, while she

returned to the house. There was a great deal for her to do there, but her mother was no longer the anxious charge she had been during the past winter and early spring. Mrs. Daly belonged to that class of sufferers—"eaters of their own hearts"—on whom a great and general calamity acts as a sort of tonic, strengthening them and even giving them a fresh hold on life, by drawing them out of themselves, and making them conscious of greater powers of usefulness than they had credited themselves with previously. While the whole air was full of evil tidings, and news of sickness and death came with every hour, Mrs. Daly had left off listening exclusively for an anticipated note of woe to herself. She could let Pelham go forth now into more real danger than had ever been around him before without counting the minutes until his return. She said to herself that she had given him up, and that act of surrender of the object of her idolatry had opened her heart towards her other children. A few weeks ago Ellen would have dreaded the effect on her mother of such letters as had arrived that morning: now she could count on her feeling no more than a reasonable disappointment at news that removed a possible chance of prosperity from Pelham's horizon.

Mrs. Daly had had the first perusal of Mary Pelham's letter, and had been pondering over its contents during her

task of weighing out pounds of rice for distribution, and Ellen guessed where her thoughts had been by the flush on her cheek, and the unusual sparkle of indignation in her eyes. She was angry at what she looked upon as a slight to her children, but she was not utterly overwhelmed, as would have been the case formerly.

"Dear mamma, I have left you too long to this weary work. You are tired," Ellen said.

"No, I am glad to spare you, and for you to be out of doors talking to Connor. What does he say to the Pelham Court news?"

Ellen smiled. "Well do you know, I am afraid I now believe, as I never did before, in there being a grain of reality in his love for Lesbia. He protests that he does not care, and is braving it out. If he had lamented and been sentimental, I should not have minded. I should have known his sorrow was not sincere."

"Poor Connor! You think he is disappointed then, Ellen? I must have been very blind that time at Whitecliffe never to have suspected in the least that both my sons were falling in love with a girl whose name I scarcely took the trouble to learn. When I look back to what she was then, and what I then felt about her, I find it hard to realize that she has had the happiness of all my children in her keeping."

"Only for a time. This morning's news takes her and all the Thornleys quite out of our lives—don't you think os? They will never return to Ireland after Lesbia has married Marmaduke Pelham; Uncle Charles would not allow it. They will settle at Abbot's Thornley, and the Castle will have to be let or sold to some one else."

"Who would dream of buying or renting it, Ellen?"

"Then, mamma, we will all go back and starve there; we will make it a real Ugolino tower."

"Ellen, I can't smile at such a ghastly joke. You must not be surprised that this morning's news is a blow to me; it kills some of my dearest hopes. I daresay you don't give me credit for caring, and thinking, and planning for you all as much as I do; but, Ellen, I have cherished for years in my heart one dream for your future, and till this morning I always thought it would be realized in the end. The hope arose as long ago as our first visit to Pelham Court on leaving Ireland, when I observed the notice Duke took of you, and thought I saw that you tried to please him."

"My fault, my fault," said Ellen, kneeling down by her mother's side, and hiding her face on her shoulder. "Mother, dear, shall I tell you how it was?—it was *your* heart, not *his*, I was trying to win. I wanted to make you think well of me, and I fancied that if sensible, solid

Duke Pelham fell in love with me, it would be as good as a certificate of merit, and would make you believe that your reckless, wild, Irish colleen was worth something after all."

Mrs. Daly did not answer immediately; she was trying to understand how it could have come about that, loving her child as she did she should yet have driven her to such a strange expedient for making herself valued. A sense of her own incapacity to deal with this impulsive love-craving nature made her exclaim at last, almost passionately—

"Ellen, how I wish I had been right, and that you could have loved and married your cousin Marmaduke; it would have been such a safe, sheltered, honourable lot for you. How is such a one as you to struggle with the world? What can you do?"

"Something better than live in a grand house, and all the time secretly look down on my husband," said Ellen raising her head. "Mamma, it would not have been a safe or honourable lot; it would have been death to me to have lived in closest relationship with a person whom at every moment I was despising a little."

"But, Ellen, how could you despise Marmaduke, a sensible, honourable English gentleman whom everybody looks up to?"

"But I should not have been one of the 'everybody,' if I had been his wife. I should have despised him for not

being able to feel and see what I can feel and see; for having such a small, dull, colourless soul in the great, strong, cultivated body his friends admire so much. I know it would have been mean in me, almost as mean as if he were to despise me for not being able to walk ten miles in an hour; but if I had put myself into the temptation of being his wife, I am afraid I should have felt so."

"Yes," Mrs. Daly answered slowly, "you are right; there is temptation to mutual contempt when two people closely bound together are so unlike that they cannot appreciate each other's best qualities, but are always requiring each of the other something that cannot be given. Even when there is true love to begin with, the constant criticism (if it is only about trifles) builds up a wall of division that only death throws down. I am glad you will never be Marmaduke's wife."

"And since I disappointed him, I should like to be glad that he has got Lesbia."

"I can only think of Pelham's disappointment."

"I think of Pelham too; but, mamma, had you not rather have him as he is to-day, than as he would have been if he had given up his honest pride, and courted and won Lesbia as you and I think he might have done last spring? He would never have been anything all his life

but a dependent on the Thornleys if he had done that. Now he has been thrown on his own resources, and shown through this dark time the courage and power there is in him, and he has won respect from all the neighbourhood that can never be withdrawn again. The poor people who used to be prejudiced against him say that he is a true Daly now."

"Perhaps I don't value that praise as much as you do, Ellen. The prospect of there never being anything for Pelham but a life of struggle and scramble down here is a hard one for me to reconcile myself to."

"I wish there were nothing worse before us, mother. I wish our horizon were clear towards a life of work anywhere, with only everyday anxieties and privations to meet."

"Don't let me teach you to fear, Ellen; it has been the bane of my life—so great a torment that I sometimes think I suffer least at the moments when my worst fears are realized. In this dark hour let us take the rest of knowing that the darkness is here, that we have not to look for it."

"Or let us look to the dawn. Mamma, did you hear the news about Father Peter?"

"That he is dead, do you mean?"

"Yes, indeed; Biddy O'Rea came early this morning to tell us. The poor old man was feeling very ill on Sunday,

it seems. Instead of preaching, as he generally does before mass, he came and stood by the altar, and said three times over a sentence out of the epistle for the day, 'The fashion of this world passeth away,' and then he sat down and buried his face in one of those old cotton pocket-handkerchiefs of his, and cried, and all the people in the little chapel cried with him; but Biddy assured me there was a power of comfort in the tears, for had not Father Peter given the best news he could to them that found the world such a hard place to live in? The misery and the suffering, and the dying of it were only passing fashions; and the true life was to come. He had gone to find it now."

"Cousin Anne loses an affectionate old friend in him. I hope the news won't throw her back in her recovery. Would it not be well for you to go and stay with her to-night, and see how she is?"

"Oh, if I might; if I thought you would not miss me. Pelham promised to be home early, and I would make Connor promise not to stir from the house in case of your wanting him."

"But how would you go to the Hollow?—who would drive you?"

"I could walk; the short cut across the mountains is not too far for me on a calm day like this, and I want to call at a cabin on my way. It's three days since any of the

Malachy family have been here, and I fear they may be in great straits for food. The neighbours would not go near them I know, even if they were in the last extremity."

"And I can't bear to think of your visiting them alone in that solitary place among the hills. What could you do for them if you found them dying of fever?"

"I should not be far from help. I could go on to Father Peter's house in the next valley, which is sure to be crowded with visitors to-day. I will set out early and get to Good People's Hollow long before sunset."

Half an hour later, Ellen, with a small basket of provisions on her arm, was climbing a steep sheep walk, that, winding up the side of a grassy mountain, rounded its edge, sloped in more or less precipitous descents to the broad valley that divided the green range of the Joyce hills from the barren Maam Turk mountains.

The cabin, that was the first object of her walk, lay beyond the fertile valley, in a stony ravine, carved by a long dried-up water course in one of the dark sides of the bare limestone hills. It was the rudest possible shelter, built of loose stones, and so crouched amid projections of rock, as to be invisible at a little distance. It was hardly better than a den such as a wild animal might have sought, but it served the purpose of the banned man, hunted out of fellowship by his old comrades, not so much

for his crime as for the consequences supposed to have followed upon it. Ellen had sought him out in his horrible solitude once or twice before during this summer on errands of mercy, and she had no fear whatever in venturing herself in a place where hardly any one else in the neighbourhood would have put their feet. There might be sad sights awaiting her there, but she was growing accustomed to these, and had indeed become so far hardened to them, that when she had climbed the steepest bit of the path, and found it necessary to sit down on a stump of dry moss to rest, she could so far put anticipation away, as to be able to rest her eyes and heart, wearied with sad sights, by full enjoyment of the beauty and peace around her.

It was one of the bright, warm, still days of which they had had so few through the summer, that in looking back Ellen thought she could count them all on her fingers. The fine days had made up for their rarity, however, she thought, by having a peculiar beauty of their own such as the fine days of other summers had never hitherto attained to. It was as if the blue sky and the sun, so seldom seen, rained down a tenderer love and beauty upon the earth to make up for their constant veiling, doing their best to show forth the glory that ever follows on the trace of tears —"the clear shining after rain."

Was it the atmosphere, heavy with moisture, or the rain-drenched earth, spreading its wet bosom to the comforting of the sun, that had the largest share in producing the magic gradations of lovely hues that blended near view and distant horizon into such a wondrous harmony From her elevated seat, Ellen looked down on a wide-spread landscape of valley, mountain, and lake. Miniature mountains and valleys an eye accustomed to grander scenes might have called them, but all borrowed majesty of form and endless variety of hue from the many-tinted air-veil that draped them around and harmonized the whole into a scene of almost unearthly loveliness. On the heights were still blue tarns held in the hollows of emerald hills; further down lay shimmering sheets of opal-coloured water, shadowed by dark rocks. Sparkling green valleys ran up between the sides of the grey hills, gaining a foothold on their slopes here and there, and climbing up to hang verdant moss-wreaths and flame-coloured lichens round the wild, rough crags. At rare intervals, a clump of trees might be discovered springing in a sheltered hollow, with a farm-house roof, or the white walls of a group of cabins, peeping out between their boughs. On every side countless falls wound their devious ways, bubbling slowly and almost silently through rich moss, or hurrying with much clatter down rocky steeps to

their rest in the lakes below. Here was another window opening out from the famine-tower, which Ellen thought it was well to stand at, for a few minutes now and then, and look through.

Through—yes, that was the word—it was there for her to look through. But at what was she to look? How did the mid-day glory on the hills fit in with her day's work? how was it to strengthen her for the sights that would meet her in the valleys below?

As she sat questioning her sad heart, another light than the light of the August sun seemed all at once to be shown to her—a light from a hill in a far-off land gleaming from garments made "whiter than fuller could white them," from a face that, from being marred with a sorrow beyond any man's, became transfigured with glory beyond the glory of the sun. Ah, this was the link she wanted. Here she was having a glimpse of the transfigured face displayed for a moment to give strength and hope; but the sorrowful, marred countenance would look upon her as divinely, in the suffering He had shared and sanctified, in the death over which He was victor, and which He had made now a triumphant gateway to Himself.

A little stream that was slowly welling through the thick moss by her side seemed to take up the refra oas her thoughts and murmur it in low music: "The fashion

of this world passeth away." The glory and the beauty of it, the sorrow and the dying of it, passing shows through which His face may be seen summing up all in victory and peace.

It was deep rest to sit on the hill and listen to the rivulet's song, but it must not be indulged in too long. From one of the little ravines into which Ellen looked from her height, came every now and then, as the wind brought it, the sound of a bell tolling. It was being rung in Father Peter's little chapel, among the cluster of low cabins clinging to the foot of that green hill in the far distance; and Ellen could descry little dark spots coming towards the village along different mountain and valley roads. Some service was going on in the chapel to which the country people were flocking; she need not fear a too lonely walk to-day. More directly below her lay the black hollow between the frowning mountain peaks to which she was bound. Its upper slope, in which was built Malachy's cabin of stones, lay in dark shadow even at mid-day, and under a cloudless sky. There was no chance that he or anyone belonging to him would venture himself among the worshippers in the neighbouring valley. The wretched man living there had lost the only other friend beside herself who shared the secret of his retreat, and who compassionated the misery of remorse mingled

with baffled longings for vengeance, with which his wild heart had been torn for months past.

The thought of his despair at the news of Father Peter's death, and of his probable great need of help, roused Ellen at last to take up her basket and begin the descent of the hill. There was some difficult scrambling among slippery, moss-grown crags, and then a long, smooth slope of short thymy grass, fragrant at every step, where sheep and goats were feeding. When she was about half way down this slope, her eye fell on a figure approaching along the road that wound through the valley she was about to cross. At first her thoughts were idly occupied in wondering whether the black speck were lessening or nearing. Was it some one going to or returning from Father Peter's wake? Then, as the distance visibly lessened, a keener interest was awakened. It was not a countryman in a frieze-coat, she was now certain. Neither was the figure Connor's; it was shorter than Connor. It was not Pelham's walk either, yet it was one she recognised. Then Ellen stood quite still for a minute, and knew that her heart was beating more quickly than when she had climbed the steepest part of the hill. The contour of the figure, and even the face was recognizable now. It was John Thornley, whom she had not seen since their departure from Castle Daly in the early summer, when he had taken

leave of her with an expression of pained surprise on his face, which told her how much her hasty retreat, and refusal to give the explanation Bride sought, had lowered her in his estimation. She had often said to herself since then that she hoped she would not see him again till some very distant day when their present troubles were all but forgotten, and when the misunderstanding between them could be calmly discussed, and explained without effort. There was no help for it, however, now; he had recognised her, and was hurrying on. They met and shook hands at the foot of the hill. It was just a common place "How do you do?" as if they had seen each other yesterday, followed by inquiries, on John's side, after the health of the other inmates of Eagle's Edge, and then they turned and walked along the road together; but Ellen had seen that it was no recollection of the painful circumstances of their last interview that was in John's face now, but a tremulous, overpowering joy at meeting again, which yearning eyes and trembling lips betrayed, in spite of the carefully-composed manner that would have denied all emotion. A long, awkward silence followed. Ellen had nearly reached the head of the ravine where Malachy lived before she could think of a sentence with which to break it. Yet she felt she must talk, and find some excuse for dismissing her

unexpected companion before she could perform her errand.

"We did not expect to see you here again this year, or at least not so soon," she concluded, vexed with herself to perceive that what she had intended for a commonplace remark had brought a change of countenance, and called up the very look of pained reproach she had been relieved not to see at first.

"I came back," he answered, "because I could not stay away any longer; but I believe it was a letter of Miss O'Flaherty's that gave the final impulse to my movements, and fixed my journey for this particular week."

"She did not ask you to come back?"

"Oh no, the letter was not even addressed to me. Bride had it while we were staying at Pelham Court, and gave it me to read one morning when we rode to the county town to attend a public meeting where your uncle was to speak."

"Lesbia told me of it."

"She would describe the meeting better than I, for I heard very little of the speeches, or rather I should say I listened to them with very unsympathetic ears. I had read Miss O'Flaherty's letter just before I entered the room, and all through the proceedings I imagined myself listening to you contradicting and pleading against the

statements the speakers urged. By the time the meeting came to an end I had grown so restless that on reaching Pelham Court I could do nothing else but pack up my clothes and set forth to ascertain what was happening here for myself." The eyes raised to Ellen's face during the concluding sentence of this speech scanned it with keen anxiety, as if the expression written there was what he had come expressly to scrutinise.

"So many people were said to be ill, I feared what I might find," he added slowly, after a pause.

"You know, I suppose, that Cousin Anne has been very ill, and that Father Peter M'Guire died this morning?"

"Yes, I went to the 'Hollow' early, having arrived at Castle Daly late last night. I was on my way to Eagle's Edge with a message from Miss O'Flaherty to you to beg you to come to her."

They had reached the head of the stony ravine now, and Ellen stood still. "I am actually on my way to the Hollow," she said, "but I have to call at a cabin near here first. I may be detained half an hour. Will not you turn back now, and go on to Eagle's Edge? Mamma and Connor are at home, and will be delighted to see you."

"You send me away! you want to get rid of me when we have only this instant met," John exclaimed in a tone of vexation.

"No, I don't," Ellen answered. "I want to ask you a great many more questions about Lesbia and my cousins, but I must go into that cabin alone."

"We will walk down the ravine together at all events, and I will wait outside while you go in. But where is there a cabin? I see nothing but a heap of loose stones Surely no one lives in such a desolate place. Are you going to scramble up there?"

"Yes, it is a cabin; the door faces the rock, and there are rude steps cut in the steepest part of the hill. Please don't come any further; there is a sick person inside, who will be distressed by the sight of a stranger."

When Ellen had climbed the steep head of the ravine, and rounded the jutting-out ledge of rock that partly concealed Malachy's rude shieling, she paused to rest for an instant, and looking across the craggy wall into the hollow beneath was relieved to find that her companion had not attempted to follow her even with his eyes. He was standing sentinel at the foot of the rock-stairs she had clambered, with his face towards the opening of the ravine.

His figure was diminished in size by the distance, but Ellen wished him still further away, when she remembered the sight that would meet her eyes as soon as she pushed open the rough door at the end of the path she had

entered on. From some dark corner of the rude shed, the gaunt shape of a man would start up at the sound of her foot-step, and lift eyes full of a terrible hunger to her face.

It was now nearly a year since these two—the man she had left below, and him she was about to visit—had been hunting each other, one with the hope and purpose in his mind of bringing the actors in a great crime to just punishment, the other with a deadly hunger for vengeance in his heart that the pangs of bodily hunger had scarcely had power to tame. Ellen's heart sank in fear at the thought of their discovering each other's neighbourhood, even now; but she thought it better to run this risk than to leave her errand unaccomplished. Malachy's wife and children and old mother shared the shelter of the shieling with him, and had become since the famine objects of almost equal dislike to the neighbours, who believed that a curse rested on the family, and who were capable of leaving them to starve unthought of—though they would not on any temptation have delivered up the man to justice.

The cabin door stood open, and there was no smoke issuing from the aperture; but Ellen was not surprised. The weather was warm, and as it was three days since any member of the household had been to Eagle's Edge to beg for food, it was only too probable that there was nothing

in the cabin to cook. She pushed the door a little; it seemed to resist the pressure as if something lay across the threshold, and it was not without considerable effort, and with a dull thud as of some heavy body thrust aside, that it yielded so far as to allow her to squeeze herself inside.

It was almost dark in the inclosure, for though the loosely-fitted stones let air and light through, the upper end of the ravine lay in deep shadow just then, and the eye had to grow accustomed to the dim light for anything to be seen distinctly.

"Molly," Ellen said, softly, "it is I come to bring you food at last. Are you all asleep? Molly! Dennis!" She called twice, and then her eyes beginning to see what was around her, grew large with horror, and a fit of cold shuddering seized her. The place was not empty, but it was very still. Just opposite to her was a figure half-seated on the ground with its back to the wall. A child's form lay motionless across its knees, the head rested on a stone in the wall, and there was light enough through a crevice above to show Ellen that the death-pale, hollow face, with dropped jaw, and half-closed eyes that looked so strangely without seeing, were those of Malachy's young wife. "Nora," she tried to say, but the word would not come, only a hoarse sob in her throat; then she turned

and looked into the dense darkness at the end of the shed where it sloped up towards the mountain side. A heap of dead fern-leaves and moss lay along the floor there, and on it were stretched two other motionless bodies of an old woman and a child.

Ellen forced herself to stoop over them, and in desperation dragged away the tattered shawl that half hid the old woman's face, and putting her hand on her shoulder, shook her gently. "Molly, Molly, wake! I have brought you help." The figure fell back into its settled position again as soon as her hand left it, and Ellen started up horrorstruck again. Her hand had come in contact with the withered cheek, and its touch stung her with cold. She felt she must struggle out into the open air before she fainted, and then, preparing to move, she perceived what the object was that had impeded the opening of the door. It lay almost over her feet; she had stepped on it in entering; the prostrate body of Dennis Malachy, who seemed to have fallen down beside the threshold as he was attempting to leave the shieling, perhaps to seek help in the last extremity of his wife and children, perhaps to escape from the chamber of death. There was something in his attitude less lifeless than in that of the others. Sick and trembling as she was, Ellen could not step over him again without ascertaining whether there might not

be a spark of life left. She turned the face, which was towards the floor, upwards, drew it to the opening, and rested the head on the door sill where the air could blow upon it; then, hardly knowing whether she most dreaded to see the eyes remain shut, or that they should open on her with some look of unspeakable pain, such as she could never forget afterwards, she rushed out of the cabin and tottered down the rocky path, stumbling and dragging herself up again, but never pausing till she had reached the spot where John Thornley stood and seized him by the arm.

"Come! come! there are people dying up there. There are dead people up there."

Her voice sounded strange and hoarse to herself, and greatly startled him, as did her pale face and horror-stricken looks.

"You must not go there again. I will go," he said. "I will see what is wanted, and fetch help."

"To stay here alone would be worse, much worse," Ellen answered, recovering her voice and calmness in a degree, now that a living fellow-creature's face was near to be looked at. "Let me go back; there is a man in the cabin up there who has some life in him still, I think; if I go back to him with you, and we can do anything for him, I shall not always have such a great horror of what I have seen."

"How near is help to be had?" John asked, as they were climbing the path, "for I cannot let you stay here if the man you speak of recovers and lingers a while. Some one else must be fetched to watch him."

"It would not be so hard as another watch we had," Ellen said, the scene of her father's death flashing on her memory as she spoke, and with it a shuddering wonder that she should be going to minister to the last moments of the man, to whose thirst for revenge he had fallen a victim, and with John Thornley to aid her. She had been forgetting who it was that was dying during the last moment or two.

John could have knelt down and kissed the stone on which her foot rested at the moment, in gratitude for that *we;* but she was not thinking of him except as a strange coadjutor in the strange task. He would not let her enter the cabin till he had gone in first. When he beckoned her to follow, Dennis Malachy had been lifted from the threshold of the door, and placed on a heap of straw near the wall, with a log of wood under his head. John had opened Ellen's basket, and was attempting to put some drops of brandy between the parched lips. "He is not dead," he said, "but I don't think there is a possibility of saving him; he is so terribly wasted, he must die."

Ellen knelt down on the floor, and began to bathe the

temples with water. "He breathes still. I wish you would go down into the village and find a priest, and bring him here. The old woman who is lying dead there did that for papa."

"This is Dennis Malachy then, your father's murderer? I did not know him."

"The cause of his death, but not his murderer," said Ellen, quickly, withdrawing her hand instinctively at the word from the brow she was bathing. "He told me solemnly it was not his hand that sent the bullet."

"You have known where he was ever since?"

"No, only since hunger drove him to betray himself to me. I remembered then that papa forgave. Only he forgave—no one else could; the others hunted Dennis to his death. But he was not always a bad man; I remember him when he was good and gentle, and used to meet us on our walks, and carry us home on his shoulder when we were tired. I don't know whose fault it was that he came to this, but I don't believe that it was all his own."

With the last words she slipped her arm under his head, and raised it a little. The lids that drooped over the half-closed eyes quivered, the breast heaved, and with a sudden spasm of parting strength, the dying man sat half upright, and stared wildly round him. John Thornley

involuntarily put up his hand to shade his eyes from the stare fixed on him.

> "An orphan's curse might drag to hell
> A spirit from on high;
> But, oh, more terrible than that
> Is the curse in a dead man's eye."

The lines came into John's mind, and stayed there, and could not be exorcised for long afterwards. Then the dying man's eyes were turned on Ellen, and the hands that had clutched convulsively were spread out imploringly towards her.

"Miss Eileen, Miss Eileen, save me! don't let me do it or I'll lose me soul. Why did ye bring *him* here, that I might curse him wid me last breath, and lose me soul?"

"You shall not, Dennis," Ellen said, bending over him so as to hide Mr. Thornley's face from his sight. "Look at me, and remember the words I said to you that night, when I told you my father forgave you, and that the Father in heaven forgives us when we forgive our enemies."

"Shure you bade me spare him, and I did your bidding, and I'm glad. It's all over wid us now, Miss, Eileen. Praise be to God and His blessed Mother! the starving's over, and the pain wid all of us, and I'm going. Why would we any of us live any longer?—dying's a dale aisier —in peace." The head sank back again, the last words

were murmured between lips that quivered, and then became convulsed in a strong spasm. There was a long, shuddering gasp, then Mr. Thornley came round and drew Ellen's arm from under the head.

"It is over," he said. "Come away with me; you must not stay here a moment longer; there is nothing more for you to do; I will take care that all is done that is right by these." He glanced round at the corpses. "We shall surely be able to persuade some one from the next village to come up and do what is necessary."

"But are you sure there is nothing more we can do? The children," said Ellen; "the little girl lying by the grandmother in the bed—little Nora—I hardly looked at her."

"But I have looked. Those two must have been dead many hours; it is a terrible sight; you must come away." Almost by force he raised her from her kneeling position on the floor, and lifted her over the threshold into the open air. Then she sat down on a stone by the wayside, and burying her face in her hands gave way to the tears that had been choking her for so long. He stood by watching the bright drops that trickled through her fingers on to the ground, longing for the right and the power to comfort her, and almost hating himself for the excess of feeling that made it impossible to say a word

that would not betray too much; and then again for not having courage even in that moment to say all.

She lifted up her head after a long time, and turned to him with one of the appealing confiding looks, free from all self-consciousness, that always touched him so deeply—so much more deeply than any consciousness would have done, even if it had given him more hope.

"Do you think," she said humbly, "that this was at all my fault?"

"Your fault! how could it be? I was thinking that there was no one on earth but yourself who, under the circumstances would have acted towards that man as you have acted."

"But I went away last week to stay with cousin Anne, trusting that Father Peter would look after the Malachys, and you see he was not able."

"In times like these, when there is so much misery around, it will not do to waste strength in regretting what was unavoidable. It must have been a miserable death-in-life they lived up here shunned by every one."

"Cousin Anne offered to take the children, but Nora and Molly would not give them up. They said they would all hold together till the end, and so they have done."

By this time Ellen had risen from the stone, and they

proceeded to descend the hill. When they reached the head of the ravine, John Thornley said,

"Which way shall we turn? Shall I take you home and get help from Eagle's Edge, or will you persevere in going to the Hollow?"

"To the Hollow, I think. We are more than half way there, and about half a mile from this place there is a hamlet where I know a great many people are congregated to-day."

The walk was almost a silent one, for it was impossible to talk on any common topic; and the horror of the scene they had left seemed to grow instead of lessen in John's mind as they walked through the smiling green valley in the glorious autumn afternoon; the air, fragrant with the thymy scent of the thousand minute flowers that bordered the road, musical with placid country sounds—sheep-bleatings and cattle-lowings from the hill-sides, and with the plover's shrill cry as the bird skimmed across their path and darted away, rising high in the air and dipping again in search of food on the boggy surface of the valley.

"I cannot get the remembrance of that man's face out of my mind," John began abruptly, when they were near enough to the village to hear the stroke of the little chapel bell that was still tolling. "I am afraid the terrible reproach there was in it when he looked his last on me

will haunt me in every miserable or weak moment of my life henceforth. Yet, looking back soberly, as I must try to do, I don't think I ought to blame myself for any part of my conduct to him. I only did what I believed to be my duty."

"It did not look like duty to him, you see, because he had grown up with notions of rights and law very different from yours. He appeared to you only a lawless robber holding on to property that did not belong to him; but in his own mind there were stubborn, blind beliefs in rights that had come down to him through centuries of his ancestors, and these were too much a part of him to be thrown off at any bidding of yours. He could not have explained himself to you or any one, but the conviction that you were the robber and injurer, and not he, was strong in his thoughts and confused all his relations to you. I have often talked over these things with Cousin Anne lately, when we have been trying to account for the terrible crimes this year has witnessed among people whose generosity of nature we believe in, and for the wild projects current now among Connor's friends."

"If I had gone to the appointed meeting that night, and been shot, Dennis would have been looked upon as a hero. These people would not have connected that crime with punishment. Yet I was only acting in your father's interest."

"They did not understand that, because my father was such a careless ruler, and the change was so great and sudden. My dear father blamed himself, you know, and thought that death-shot his due."

After a pause of thought, John took up the conversation again. "I begin to see where the fault lies. A few minutes ago I was saying vehemently to myself that at least I had been guilty of no injustice, yet I felt that the sting of remorse would not strike so deep if I were really blameless. Now I see how it is. I ought never to have come here, knowing so little as I did of the people I had to deal with, having scarcely glanced at the problems that rise up before me now as almost unfathomable. I know what Miss O'Flaherty thought of my presumption. If I had been less self-confident, less contemptuous of other people's doings, less full of system, perhaps—but I dare not look back in that way, the consequences are too terrible. Your father's death, the miserable end of that man and his family—it will not do to look back and trace consequences in cases of such tremendous importance; it would be giving conscience too terrible a power; the burden of life would be too heavy to carry for a day."

"Yes, indeed," said Ellen, "if we had to carry all by ourselves. We should be tempted to put off seeing our own share of responsibility in all the ill that happens,

however much worse the suffering might be in the end, when we had to see the truth."

"Don't speak of yourself as if you had any share in the pain to-day has brought to me."

"But I have. I don't think any great wrong or misery can befall without more or less blame belonging to all the lookers-on. It is a circle that spreads out farther than our dull consciences can trace. Here we are in the hamlet I spoke of. That little cottage among the trees half-way up the hill is the priest's house, where you are sure to find plenty of people to-day. I think I will go into the chapel down there. Some service or other is going on now, and I shall perhaps see some one I know who will help us if your errand fails; and I shall rest there while you go up the hill."

John despatched his business more speedily than he expected, and turned his steps towards the little white-washed building that served the villagers for a place of worship. The narrow space was so crowded to-day with people thronging round the different little altars that he had some difficulty in finding Ellen. He saw her at last among a throng of women kneeling in a circle at the end of the chapel, and he made his way up to her. The women drew apart as he approached to make room for him at her side; and almost involuntarily he knelt down

a little way behind her. There was preaching going on. He had not come in at the beginning, and could not make out whether any text for the sermon had been given out; but the sentence, "Man does not live by bread alone," was repeated several times by the preacher, and each time a groan of acquiescence burst forth from the pale lips of the famine-stricken people kneeling round, who seemed to hang upon the speaker's words as if they were food indeed. Then the preacher went on to describe in glowing words and with much metaphor and eloquence the spirit life—nourished by the true bread—into the full enjoyment of which the good priest who had addressed his flock from that spot two days ago had now entered. At another time John might have listened critically—questioning the wisdom or the utility of such an exercise under such circumstances; but now kneeling on the mud floor among that sea of pale faces that were gradually losing their ghastliness under the illumination of hope in the Unseen, thus set forth before eyes that in every other quarter beheld only despair, he could not question. Here were needs—depths and breadths and lengths and heights of suffering—which no science or philosophy of his could reach or touch, but which seemed here in these words of childlike faith to find solution swallowed up in yet more unfathomable heights and depths and lengths and breadths

of love. At the end of the sermon something was said about the new light which the dawning of that Eternal Day would cast on the perplexities and sufferings and wrongs of our lives. It would be easy, the preacher said, to forgive all wrongs, fancied or real, when all the links that had bound our lives together and to God were made clear. Ellen turned her face, radiant with a tremulous tearful smile towards him at the words and held out her hand. The moment he held it seemed to John Thornley to open the door for him into a new life. It might not be a life of happy human love, but one tending to higher, nobler, more self-sacrificing ends than he had yet known; he prayed low to himself that it might be. The next moment the blessing was given, there was a movement among the kneelers by the altar, and Ellen rose and they left the place together.

They met Peter Lynch in the throng outside the chapel door who gave Ellen such a gloomy account of his mistress's state of health that she was glad to accept his offer of a seat on the three-wheeled car which had brought him to the village, and so hasten her arrival at the Hollow.

John Thornley after placing her in the car shook hands with her in silence. It did not seem necessary for him to say, "We shall meet to-morrow." That hand-clasp in the chapel seemed just then to have made him independent of

future meetings or partings, and to have given him a spiritual hold on her presence so firm that no distance of space nor spite of circumstance could ever oblige him to let it go again. Far or near, dear to her or indifferent, he believed he should live from henceforth in its light.

CHAPTER II.

"Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers and fondly looked their last,
And looked a long farewell; and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to fare the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep."

DESERTED VILLAGE.

"YES, he was right; I have made mistakes. I would not believe anything contrary to my hopes. I chose to forget the other laws besides my own that were ruling my little kingdom. There was pride and presumption, as well as want of foresight, in my plans."

"But Mr. Thornley says now that it was he who was in the wrong—he does indeed, Cousin Anne. He accuses himself of presumption for differing from you; and I liked him for saying that, and believed in him as I had never done before."

"Well, the purging is severe enough; we ought to come out of it emptied of old, self-glorifying illusions at all events."

Anne O'Flaherty, who, in the energy of her first speech, had partly raised herself from her sofa, sank back weary and faint at these words, and Ellen came near to bathe her forehead, and make her smell a flagon of scent, concocted, after one of her own recipes, from Good People's Hollow wild flowers in happier days.

She was slowly recovering from a bad attack of the famine fever. "But was it recovery, or only passing into another stage of illness?" Ellen sadly asked herself, when, having done what she could to revive her patient, she resumed her seat by her side, and looked lovingly at the changed face. There was something on it more hopeless than traces of illness; there was a lifeless droop of the mouth and eyes, a weight of weariness and pain on the brows ("heart-break") Peter Lynch called it, which Ellen had first noticed there before the fever attacked her, on her return from Galway, where she had accompanied the first band of emigrants from her valley, and seen them embark in the ship that was to take them to America.

Another party was shortly to follow, as might be gathered from the heaps of bundles of clothing ticketed with names that filled the tables, and were piled up against

the walls of the turret room, to the exclusion of the little works of art that had been stored there in old times. Ellen's fingers had been busy on the component parts of another bundle when the conversation began; and Anne had only lately let a flannel garment fall to the ground, because her weak fingers could not hold it. In a few minutes Ellen took up her work, and with the busy movement of her needle, resumed the talk, beginning, without preface, on the subject that she knew her patient's thoughts were at work upon.

"I think the letters from America that arrived last night are quite as encouraging as we had any right to expect. To be sure, the two old O'Shanes, and Widow Joyce, and pretty little Katty Malony, died on the voyage; but a great many more of them would have died of the fever if they had stayed here, and the rest of the party seem to have landed in excellent spirits and hopes. Don't you like Mary Burke's description of America—'A blessed land that God has made on purpose for the poor.'"

"I ought to feel more cheered than I do; but I am like a foolish old hen-mother, whose brood has strayed beyond her power to cluck them back to her. Those people, whose forefathers lived and died on this little nook of earth under my forefathers' protection, and whose hearts seemed bound to the soil that nourished them, I thought that God

had given them into my hands to rule and keep guard over; and I want to be quite sure that it is His decree, and not my own misreading of it, that compels me to open my hand and let them stray away."

"Mr. Thornley has no doubt that emigration is the right remedy for the present misery. He says that it offers a much better life to those who go away, and that being rid of what he calls the surplus population will immensely improve the conditon of those who stay."

"Yes, I understand the reason of that, if men or nations lived by bread alone; but they don't, or at least we Irish people don't. There is no saying what is the surplus population in a race where hearts are bound to hearts so intimately, that distance can stretch but never break the links. I don't believe the emigration will stop at just those people going who are not wanted here. Soon there will be thousands of voices calling from the other side of the sea, 'Come over to us,' and the mothers, and the brothers, and the lovers left at home will rise and go, and in their turn swell the chorus of invitation till there is no one left to hear it—till our valleys and our hill-sides are empty or inhabited by aliens. I do not say that a better state of things might not arise—for England; but I am an Irishwoman; I cannot help having some qualms at assisting at what I fear may be our nation's death throes."

"Connor would rejoice if he heard you speak in this fashion, Cousin Anne. He would claim you as one of his party at once. His friends are very angry about the emigration, and say, as you do, that now the tide has set in nothing will stop it but a revolution that restores independence to Ireland."

"As I don't say. You know I have no sympathy with that baseless dream of Connor's party, though I may take the same view they do of what this crisis is for Ireland."

"Connor says this time is just the last possible opportunity for Ireland to stand up and claim her independence as a united nation, for that if her people allow themselves to be drawn or driven away from their native soil, the old links between rich and poor will be broken for ever; and that when the peasantry come back, as he believes they will, and claim the land, it will not be so much as Irishmen against Englishmen, as poor against rich."

"That is looking further ahead than I should have credited Connor with disposition to do."

"His opinions are a good deal formed by his friend D'Arcy O'Donnell."

"Then I suspect it was that same D'Arcy O'Donnell who did me the dis-service of sending me a newspaper, with a column of warning and indignation in it against the promoters of emigration. I found it on my table the

evening I got back from Galway, and read it to the echo in my head of my poor exiles' farewell sobs and groans, and all through my illness sentences from it were haunting me. It is there in the third pigeon-hole of my desk, still in the wrapper in which it came. I kept that to show the direction to Connor, and take his opinion as to who had troubled himself to launch it at me."

Ellen drew the newspaper from its hiding-place, and unwound the cover. "I will take it to Con; but I think I can pronounce on these curves and dashes—they are D'Arcy O'Donnell's; Connor employs me in copying papers of his often enough for me to know his hand-writing by heart. Oh, look, here is something written on the inside of the cover; it is an old MS. sheet—part of a poem. I suppose there is no harm in making it out, for I daresay it has been printed by this time."

"Read it aloud to me; I am curious."

"I can't quite read it all. I think it is a rough copy. The title is—'A Mother's Call':—

"Come back, sons over the sea!
Strong limbs I bore,
Ye are mine still!
Do you rise, do you move to me?
Do you hear, there, across the tossing brine,
Sons?—for the great seas swell—
I smell the breath of them, I hear the roar of them
Lapping up to the shore,
Lashing the rock—furies!

What do they come for?
Sires of yours—yearsful agonies—
Home with a wild lament,
Seas, is it this you bear?
No. But the times that come,
And the thunders I hear,
And the rent wide apart in *her* garment
That covered us, blinded us, wound us—
Chains ground that bound us,
That gyved us—sword that drank at our heart!
Leap to the rock, waves!
Leap to the land, sons, O braves!
Over graves, upon blood-trodden graves
Plant your feet!
Come times, God-revenge,
Slow, sure, complete!"

"You don't make any remark upon it, Cousin Anne."

"I am too unhappy. I was remembering how your father told me one day that I must not expect any good result to follow my poor efforts here, because the ground was so full of dragons' teeth sown in the old, unjust, revengeful times, that there was no room for good grain to grow till all the harvests of evil had been reaped. It does bring a feeling of despair when one sees that the only hope our patriots are putting before themselves is the opportunity to begin sowing more dragons' teeth."

"Yet when oppressed nations rise and right themselves the world is glad. It is not sowing dragons' teeth if they succeed."

"That depends on the spirit which prompts and carries out the rising. I dread the word 'revenge' for us Irish. Such dark deeds have been done on our side, too, that I have no faith in good coming to us, till we have risen to the heights of repentance and forgiveness."

"I wish D'Arcy O'Donnell could come and talk to you. Do you know, Anne, he was in this neighbourhood in the spring, and Connor wanted to bring him to you; but he refused, partly because he thought acquaintance with such a rebel as he would be distasteful to you, and partly because he has always kept aloof from his relations on our side—not caring to know people who, as he thinks, were hard on his mother long ago. He accepted Connor and me to cousinship because we could have had nothing to do with that last-generation quarrel."

"Nor had I; but you see it's the same spirit in everything. We sow dragons' teeth in our family relationships and reap them to the last grain. Do you happen to know the young man's address? I should like to write and make overtures of peace. I suspect he is very poor in friends older than himself."

"I know he is; do write to him, Anne, and make him come down and stay with you here. He would listen to you, if he would to anyone; and that would be good for Connor. He is in Dublin now. See, I have put his

address under his verses on the cover, that you mayn't forget it."

"How still the valley is to-day!" Ellen said, after a little pause. "I suppose it's because the school-house and work-rooms are empty, and so many people gone; but the place is not like itself with no buzzing and singing, and no red cloaks to be seen in the melancholy little bare gardens or on the hill-sides."

"Peter has given strict orders that none of the people who start for America to-morrow are to come to the lodge to wish me good-bye. I am afraid he has held out a delusive hope that, if I am left in peace to-day, I shall be strong enough to-morrow to go with them as far as Galway and see them on board. But I must not put myself in the way of another such scene as that last parting on shipboard. I wish some less gloomy person than Peter Lynch were going with them—some one who would bring a cheerful account back."

"Mr. Thornley?"

"Ah, that's a good idea; if he comes in to-day I will ask him. He would manage for the emigrants better than Peter Lynch, and talk them into good spirits."

"It would be easy enough for him; he has not the least idea what parting means to Good People's Hollow exiles. It is only mountaineers who ever have *mal du pays*.

I don't think anything could make me go; the more miserable the country is the more I feel bound to cling to it; and I think I should be very angry with anyone who tried to draw my affections away from it just now. I should so hate myself if I felt them going."

"But you would be wrong. I am afraid Connor's talk is unwholesome for you."

"I don't sympathize in his hopes, but I feel bound to stand by him when he is putting himself into danger for what, rightly or wrongly, he believes to be the good of the country. I should be very jealous of yielding to any influence that would be likely to draw us apart just now. I should feel it treachery to Connor."

"If a stronger influence than his came, you would have to follow it."

"But it shall not come. There are women in Ireland now who are caring for nothing but 'the country' and the men who still hope for her. I can emulate them."

"Take care not to fancy antagonism where it does not exist. I am very much afraid of that for you, dear."

"There are other things that I am much more afraid of for myself; but I have let you talk too long; your cheeks are quite flushed, and you look so weary. We will not speak another word till I have finished this petticoat. I daresay it will be treasured and handed down as a sacred

relic, this last piece of homespun Good People's Hollow flannel its possessor will ever own."

In alternate long silences and snatches of talk the morning in the turret-room wore away. Peter Lynch, with a face of concentrated gloom, looked in now and then for orders. The breaking up of the kingdom was almost as deadly a blow to him as to his beloved mistress. Murdock Malachy limped in, to carry off the bundles of gifts for the emigrants as they were made up; and, directed by Ellen, the little housemaids came backwards and forwards, from store-closet to cellar, bringing miscellaneous contributions to the bundles, which varied in value from shell boxes and pin-cushions of Anne's manufacture on past winter evenings, and bottles of cordial waters, to homespun cloaks and blankets. Anne portioned out these treasures with such a liberal hand, that the house seemed to be in danger of being stripped to its walls. "They must have a little overplus," she said, as excuse for herself; "they will be packed in the emigrant ship with people sent from the workhouses with hardly more belongings than slaves in a slave-ship; and they would not feel they were taking the Good People's Hollow luck with them, if they had nothing to be hospitable with."

In the afternoon there was a lull in the business of

packing. Anne, utterly worn out, dropped into a heavy sleep on the sofa, and Ellen drew her seat into the depths of the wide window-recess to look out over the valley. Then she perceived, what the stillness out of doors had prevented her suspecting before, that the little garden was crowded with people, many of them on their knees. They looked as if they had been waiting long; some partially hidden by the bushes in the garden, some crouched down behind the projecting sides of the window, out of sight, but close enough to hear the sound of voices within. Was it to catch a tone or two of Anne's voice for the last time they had come? Murdock Malachy put his head in at the turret-room door, and seeing Anne asleep closed it softly. A moment after there seemed to have been some signal given without, for the crouchers under the shrubs and in the shadows of the window projections rose up by twos and threes, and approached the front of the window till they commanded a near view of the sofa and of Anne's face, turned so as to let the evening air refresh her cheeks. Then most of them fell on their knees again, and gazed silently. Ellen drew back not to impede their view, and soon, to save them from the contagion of her own sympathetic grief, so moving was the sight of those gazing faces, puckered into grotesque contortions in order to keep down the sobs that would have disturbed the

sleeper, or the tears that would have hindered the last yearning look.

Whole families knelt together—old men and women, who had coaxed Anne O'Flaherty to ask favours for them of her father, when her lisped requests were sure to be granted, and their grandchildren, who had come to her with their lisped petitions a month or two ago. Some took one look only, and then buried their faces in their hands, and rocked themselves backwards and forwards, shaken with noiseless sobs; others knelt rigid, and looked to the last second allowed them, with wide-opened eyes, and pale, drawn faces, down which the tears trickled slowly and unheeded.

"As the souls that are let out of Purgatory on All Souls' Day, and have to go back at night, look at the Blessed Virgin through the windows of heaven," Peter Lynch whispered to Ellen, after he had signalled to the last party to rise and go; and coming up close to the low window, crossed his arms on the sill, and condescended to explain the scene to Ellen, and excuse himself for the sanction he had given to this farewell scene, which might dangerously have agitated his mistress had she awakened in the midst of it.

"*She*," he said, nodding his head towards Anne, "believed me when I tould her they would go off contint to-morrow

widout a last look at her; but sorrow a one of 'em would have moved. We'd have had a riot over it, and the phis would have sailed widout 'em. So I called thim together and made a bargain. 'Three minutes for each set of you,' I said, 'as many as can kneel by the window, if she fall asleep; and whin I lift up my finger you're to get up and go.' And some of them have been there since morning waiting for the chance, and there is not one of them but will go away wid an aisier heart for having had it."

Peter's head here disappeared suddenly, for Miss O'Flaherty moved on the sofa and opened her eyes, and Ellen rose and bent over her.

"I have had such a strangely vivid dream," she said, sitting up with an eager, refreshed look on her face. "I thought I was dead already, and lying on an open bier in my grave. It was a dark narrow space where I was lying, but at one end there was a door, opening on a well-lighted staircase, which, in my dream, I thought led up to heaven. I wanted to get up and go to the staircase; but I found myself unable to rise—there seemed to be a great weight just over my heart pressing me down. Then I looked up, and through the roof of my grave I saw a crowd of people standing round it, and their tears trickled through the turf and fell on me like lumps of lead and weighed me down. Then I thought I heard voices calling me from the top of

the stairs to come up, and one voice said, 'Why don't you pick up the tears and bring them with you to Me?' And at the sound of that voice I seemed to have strength to rise; and I began to gather up the tears, and as I did so bright figures trooped down the stairs and took them out of my hand. I expected to see the angels return by the way they came, but instead of that they rose up through the roof of the grave, and took the weeping people by the hand and led them away. I looked after them, and saw that the bare, parched-up ground on which they stood became verdant under their feet, and on every side waved with grass and flowers and ripe corn. You were the last left by the grave, and I was wondering what would happen to you, when I heard a sound of horse-hoofs coming down the road, and immediately the scenery of the dream faded, and I thought only of seeing your father ride up to this door, as he has done hundreds of times to bring you home when you have been spending the day with me. Don't I hear the sound still?"

"Yes," said Ellen; "it must have been that sound awoke you. There is some one crossing the bridge: it is Mr. Thornley. I wish he had not appeared just now. I wish you had finished your dream, and seen papa come for me."

"We must be patient: a great many messengers come

to us before the last. I am glad it is Mr. Thornley; he is much better to me than the end of my dream, for he will help us through the rest of our day's work, and satisfy me about the start to-morrow. I can't depend on Peter's judgment quite as securely as I used to do. I have noticed a change in him since my illness. His head is not what it used to be."

"Or, rather, Miss O'Flaherty's strength is failing: it's just that," Ellen remarked to John Thornley. "She was the mainspring of the life here, though she always contrived to fix her suggestions on other people, and fancy the credit of every success due to them. Peter Lynch was her Frankenstein-monster, whom she had electrified with activity herself, and of whom she afterwards stood in awe. It is sad to see how bewildered he is, poor fellow, now that the source of all his energy and importance begins to fail him."

"Yes, indeed. It almost took away my breath this afternoon to find the great Peter Lynch coming to me for directions."

It was after two or three hours of hard work, when the day was all but ended, that Ellen and John Thornley found time for even as much conversation as this. John had had half an hour's private interview with Miss O'Flaherty, and since then had been actively engaged in securing

that her arrangements for the departure of the party of emigrants on the next morning should be properly carried out, while Ellen busied herself with minor details, or in carrying news to Anne of what was going on out of doors. John had insinuated that this last observance had far better be omitted, since the hearing of occupation she had no longer strength to share was a needless strain on Anne's endurance; but Ellen could not bring herself to acquiesce in such a startling novelty as that of any undertaking being brought to a conclusion in Good People's Hollow without the mistress's participation in every step of its progress. By this time the last package of goods had been piled on to the great waggon that was to start as soon as the moon had risen, the last head of a family had been spoken with and duly instructed in the part he was to act next day, Peter Lynch had gone off to bed, and the entrance-hall, that had been more or less crowded with people and baggage for the last few hours, was emptied of all its occupants but John and Ellen. The front door stood wide open, and the freshness and peace without were tempting.

"Miss O'Flaherty said you had better go out for a walk before it was quite dark—that it would do you good," John suggested.

"I will go as far as the bridge," Ellen said, "and then

if I am wanted in the house they can call me back."

The moon would not rise for another hour, and the sunset lights had faded even from the tops of the hills. A soft pearly twilight lay evenly over the valley and the mountains, and the colourless river rushed in dark swirls and eddies round the arches of the bridge. Ellen folded her arms on the parapet, and looked down into it.

"I am glad of the sound," she said. "It is something definite to listen to. The stillness hurt me, for I fancied it full of sobs and sighs. There are so many people weeping in the valley to-night."

Then she told her companion about the scene at the turret-window while Anne was asleep. John listened, looking into her eager, agitated face like one in a dream. The words at least were dreamlike, the face that looked appealingly into his for sympathy—the sum total of interest in the world for him. A few months ago, it would have given him extreme pleasure that she should confide anything to him that troubled her; but now the contrast between her state of feeling and his own struck him with a deadly chill. He had quite made up his mind that this twilight half-hour should decide his fate. He could not bear again to leave her to suffer alone all the trouble he saw before her, and there seemed no reason

to wait longer before he spoke to her of his love; for he believed, in his new-found humility, that nothing but the overpowering strength of his affection could win back hers; to show it her fully was the only chance of awakening ever so faint a response. And now all these eager words poured out before him, with so little thought of himself in them, seemed to him as he listened to swell into a river of sound, sweeping wider and wider every minute between them—so wide, that the strong cry from his heart to her to come to him could only reach her thin and poor, as words spoken at a great distance.

"I don't believe you care in the least for what I am telling you," Ellen said at last reproachfully, when a pause in her narrative came, to which he made no response. "I thought you would have been a little interested at least. You must have been, if you had seen for yourself what I saw."

Then John turned away from her and covered his face with his hands. He had always thought himself a resolute man who had borne and could bear a great deal of pain without shrinking, but the immense disappointment that the next moment might bring seemed just then too bitter a downfall to be risked at once. Should he even now abandon his purpose and give himself a little

longer time to hope? For a moment or two he remained in silent struggle with himself.

There was a surprised expression on Ellen's face, when, pale and resolute, he turned back to her again. "I beg your pardon," she began softly, "I see you did care very much."

"No," John answered, "I was not even listening to what you said. You won't be able to forgive me unless I can make you understand how full my heart is of another thought. I dare not call it a hope."

"Can we have hopes for ourselves just now?" Ellen interrupted quickly.

"Only of one kind. Yes, let me go on; if a hope is more to us than life and death, we can have it even while we are standing between the living and the dead. Whatever was happening to ourselves and other people—if the world were crumbling round us, and you and I were left alone, I should still wish as earnestly as I do now to tell you that I love you, and I should hope as I do now that you might find some little help or comfort in knowing of my love."

There was a moment's silence, and as Ellen did not turn away, but fell into her former position, leaning against the wall of the bridge and looking up at him, John took courage and went on.

"There—the word is said; it has been on my tongue a

hundred times when I have been with you. It is a poor word for the feeling that has been in my heart ever since the first moment I saw you. I can't make you understand that. I know I have no words: people like me, who habitually hide their feelings, find themselves spellbound when they would give their lives to be able to speak out. Perhaps years of loving deeds might show you something of it. Leave to render them to you is what I ask. I should not have spoken so soon if you had been happy; but as it is, I think it better to speak for the chance that the knowledge of my love may help you through this dark time, even if it cannot for a long while to come win back yours."

Ellen listened to the end, and then let her face drop between her hands.

"Will not you answer me at all?" John said. "Must I say to you as you did to me?—Don't you care at all for what I am telling you?"

Then she lifted up a tear-wet face.

"I am so sorry, I am so sorry. How could you think that knowing that would help me?"

"Don't be so very hard on me as to say that it would not help at all—that you utterly reject what I offer."

"I don't mean to be ungrateful."

"Gratitude has nothing to do with it. I can bear any-

thing better than that word from you. It is not gratitude I want from you."

"And so, you see, I can never give anything you care for in return for all you have done for mamma and the boys, and for forgiving me, and going on caring for me, after that time when you must have thought I behaved so ill. You must really let me go on being grateful to you for that, for it touches me more than all your other benefits, though I know quite well how much you have done for us all."

"That's nothing; if it were, one kind word, one hopeful word from you, would overpay a millionfold."

"It is your saying that, makes me so very unhappy."

"I don't ask for it now, only for leave to wait on, in hope, for years, till you can give it."

"It would be no use. Years will only make it more impossible for me to give you what you want. We have to go different ways. Don't you see that it is hard enough for me to have my heart torn between Pelham and Connor, who are both wanting me to sympathize with them on different sides, dragging me different ways? If I loved you,—but I don't—oh! I could not, I could not. Forgive me for being so decided. I don't mean to give you pain indeed, but the thought is dreadful to me."

"Every answer but one must give me pain, and that one you say you cannot give."

"I can't indeed; it is quite, quite impossible."

"Then don't let us say any more about it."

He turned, and walked slowly to the house, and Ellen followed a few paces behind; but when they had nearly reached the open door, she hurried forward, and, coming up to him, touched his arm.

"I am afraid I have vexed you more than I need. I ought not to have been so vehement; forgive me for that, please?"

"No," John said deliberately, after a pause of thought; "I don't forgive you for that, I thank you. I believe you might have said it in a way that would have given me yet more pain. I can't take it all in yet, but I believe the energy with which you have refused me will save me from absolute despair. I think there must have been some pity in your heart, something pleading for me, however faintly, or you would have been less vehement. I shall not quite despair."

"Indeed you had better; but we are friends. When we knelt in the chapel yesterday, and I felt that you had forgiven me for my conduct about that essay, I was so glad. Let us be friends."

"No, we are not friends. I am your lover. There is no use in calling things by false names. I am the more sorry for your determination against me, because I promised my

sister to return immediately to England, if I found I could not be of the use to you I hoped to be. And next to you, I owe most to her."

"Your sister will be glad to get you back, and thank me."

"She loves me too sincerely, and understands too well what the disappointment of my hope will be to me, not to be bitterly sorry. I could tell her what it was to me in better words than I told you. Will you read a letter she sent by me? She wished me to give it you, whatever was the result of my speaking."

"If you like I will."

"Of course I don't expect it to influence you in any way. I only want you to know how you are thought of, and what friends you might summon to your side in a moment if you wanted them."

Ellen ran upstairs when they entered the house, and John turned into the turret-room, where Anne was still lying on the sofa by the turret-window. She carefully avoided looking at him as he entered, but he went straight up to her sofa, and stood before her.

"You were right," he said, slowly; "it was no use. Yet I am not sorry she knows."

Anne held out her hand to him. "Well, I suppose there is nothing more to be said, except that I am

disappointed. A year or two ago, when I did not really know you, how very much surprised I should have felt at myself for saying that."

"Of course, you understand that I should not have asked her if circumstances had been with me as they were a year or two ago—if I could not have offered her such a home as her father would have thought fit for her."

"Circumstances—I was not thinking of circumstances, but of the change in my feelings towards you. I hope you did not say anything of the kind to Ellen."

"No; but why?"

"I should have despaired of your ever understanding each other, if you were capable of making such a mistake as to suppose that you could tempt her from starving Ireland by talking to her of a comfortable English home."

"There is one thing I should like to ask you. Do you suppose—have you any reason to think—that I have a rival?"

"Only the 'dark little Rose,' of whom Murdock is singing out there, and the wrongs of its people that fill her heart to the exclusion of anything unconnected with them."

"Unconnected with them!—yes, I understand. If I had chanced to be a rebel—if I had written mischievous incendiary verses, she would not have disconnected me

from all that interests her. She would have believed in me then; she would have thought more of that than of all."

The sound of Ellen's approaching step stopped the complaint, and to afford himself a semblance of occupation and an excuse for keeping his face concealed, John snatched up from the floor the sheet of paper written with D'Arcy O'Donnell's verses, and signed with his name in Ellen's handwriting; and for the quarter of an hour that elapsed before Anne and Ellen retired to bed, he sat by the sofa reading and re-reading the poem, with as dark and bitter thoughts in his heart as the poet in his angriest moments had ever desired to evoke in an English bosom.

Anne had a restless night, and during the early part of it Ellen sat by her side, to be at hand to satisfy her when any anxiety about to-morrow's arrangements, or sudden recollection of something omitted that ought to have been done, flashed into her over-active mind. It was while she was dropping asleep at last, that Ellen opened Bride's letter and read it by the flickering light of the night-lamp, glad that Bride's clear bold writing made it possible to decipher every word.

"I do not put any formal beginning to my letttter," she read, "because I do not yet know whether the person who will read it is the woman in the world I congratulate most

heartily, or her I feel most sorry for. You will know when you read. I do not expect you will rejoice as I shall rejoice for you; and certainly you will not grieve as I shall grieve for you, because you don't know yet, as I do, what the heart is worth that you have either accepted or thrown away. It is not exactly about that I want to write to you. I write because whatever happens I should like you to know that I send my warmest wishes across the sea with John, for his success in winning you to be his wife; and if you ever come to understand what he has been to me, since at a very early age the troubles of life began for us both, you will know what an amount of admiration and love for you that wish implies. I will be candid, and tell you at once, that this affection does not spring from any knowledge I have of yourself, but from the reflection in John of what his love for you has done for him. Till this last year I used to think that he could not be better or more than he was; but I have now seen that loving you has made him much more. It has been like the sun, bringing out the rich and delicate shades of character that had been concealed under the frosts of our old life. I believe now that people don't grow up and get to be all they might be, till the deepest and strongest love of which they are capable is called out; and that is what has happened to him since he has seen you. For being

that to him whose good is my nearest care, I thank you, whatever else happens, and shall thank you always. If you love my brother, and are generous enough to be at all sorry for me, for losing the most intimate place in his companionship, I say to you heartily, never mind; it is better with me too now than when I thought I had it secure. The opposite roads of getting and giving up lead to the same ends with those whose feet God sets in them. Don't answer this letter unless you can write yourself at the end, what in hope I venture to sign myself—'Your sister,' Bride Thornley."

A movement in the bed made Ellen look up as she reached the end of the page. Anne had started up in bed, wide awake from her uneasy doze, and looked so alert and ready for confidence that Ellen could not resist the temptation to light a candle and give her Bride's letter to read.

"It seems a great pity to drive such people away from us. Don't you think so?" Anne remarked, as she handed the paper back to Ellen kneeling by her bed.

"Oh, Anne, don't; don't be against me."

"*Against* you, dearest?"

"Yes. When a thing can't possibly be, what is the use of looking back to it, and reproaching oneself?"

"If you don't love him, of course it cannot be; but.

Ellen, I must tell you this now, however angry you are. Once or twice this summer you have said, or left unsaid, little things that disposed me to think that you did love Mr. Thornley."

"But you must have been mistaken; and Anne, even if I did—mind, I am not confessing it—but even if I did love him, it would still be impossible for me to do as he asks. So many obstacles rise in the way that I have not the heart to trample down—promises to Connor, old recollections of painful scenes in my childhood, old jealousies over my father when I thought the English half of the family looked down on him. It would be with half a heart I should come to an English lover; and the half I had turned my back upon would be so indignant and so sore. For Mr. Thornley's sake, as well as my own, I must not do it."

"Not in this mood, certainly."

"All the time he was talking, and since, a verse of one of Sullivan's poems, which Connor is always quoting, would come into my mind and ring like a warning in my head—

> 'A separate race, distinct, apart,
> And so till life itself shall end;
> The English and the Irish heart
> No human power can fuse or blend.'

I am afraid I should always suspect him of looking down on me for being an Irishwoman."

"Give me Miss Thornley's letter then. I shall take it quite away, or some day, when you are as old as I am, you might read it over again, and take its generosity very bitterly to heart, contrasting it with your own suspicion and prejudice. I did not know that your mind was so full of dragon seeds, or that you had such baneful harvests to reap still, my poor child."

CHAPTER III.

"Let us strike hands as hearty friends!
No more, no less; and friendship's good;
Only don't keep in view ulterior ends
And points not understood
In open treaty. Rise above
Quibbles and shuffling off and on;
Here's friendship for you if you like; but love,—
No, thank you, John."

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

"BRIDE, dear, you won't very much mind the trouble of taking Mrs. Joseph Maynard out shopping this morning, will you? She has set her heart on going to some sale in the Tottenham Court Road, and I have ordered the carriage at twelve; and you had better take your purse with you, for she is sure to forget hers, and want to buy lots of little things. And oh, by the way, there's Johnnie and Bobbie and Wattie; could you drop them at the Polytechnic on your way, and call for them some time in the afternoon, when you think they will be tired? Something must be

invented for them to do this morning, and I really don't think I dare leave them to plague John again."

"So your hospitality has arrived at the vicarious stage already, Lesbia, has it?" John himself remarked from the end of the drawing-room he had just entered with his hands full of letters. "It is sooner than I expected. I gave you an entire fortnight for the glory of patronizing your old tyrants to overweigh the trouble of entertaining them, and here at the end of ten days you are rolling the burden on Bride's shoulders, who has no old grudges to balance it with."

Lesbia, who was standing before Bride's writing-table attired in a riding habit, and with the most becoming possible little feathered hat on her head, turned round quickly—"Now, John, the Maynards have been here three weeks at least, and I am sure if you were not so absent you would have seen how I have devoted myself to them—giving up two operas and one singing lesson, and playing at draughts with Dr. Maynard nearly every evening."

"Ah, yes, while the novelty of dazzling them and consciously heaping coals of fire on their miserable heads lasted, I allow you played your part to perfection; but I don't count the week while Dr. Maynard stayed, for I observed you devoted yourself solely and singly to his subjugation, and there you were simply following your

instincts and annexing another province to your conquered territory in the Pays-des-tendres. That does not count."

"Dr. Maynard, indeed!"

"Well, I know he is a not a novelty; but he is a man, and *not* a brother, and therefore in a degree worth pleasing. I have no doubt you had made inroads on his heart even in your Cinderella days, and gained little occasional victories from the cinder-heap; but that must have made the pleasure of walking over the ground fully armed all the greater."

"I can't think what you mean, John. I wish you were not so fond of puzzling me. Whenever I want you to go anywhere with me, in the morning, you say you are busy, yet you can always find time to come into the drawing-room and say disagreeable things."

"That is to countenance you, Babette, in making Bride *do* disagreeable things. If I did not set you an encouraging example of unamiability, I don't see how you could answer it to your conscience to inflict the Maynards upon her for a whole day, after asking them here yourself, and promising solemnly to be answerable for their entertainment."

"Never mind, John," said Bride, looking up from a letter she was sealing, and nodding cheerfully, "I am really very glad to take my share. I approved of Lesbia's sending an

invitation to our cousins this spring, so I ought to be ready to give up a little time to their amusement; and I am not arrived at such a pitch of self-indulgence as to consider it a great hardship to sit in an easy carriage for an hour or so while other people make bargains. I shall keep clear of that part of the business by taking a book with me."

"Oh dear, I'm afraid that will only half satisfy Mrs. Maynard," cried Lesbia; "she will want you to look on and advise, and buy, as a present to herself or one of the children, everything she particularly admires and says she cannot afford to pay for. That is what I had to do when I took her out shopping last week."

"You shall have all the popularity such admirable behaviour as a shopping companion deserves, then," said Bride, laughing; "I cannot undertake to imitate it. I have other ways of spending my money. Mrs. Maynard will console herself by remarking a little oftener than usual, this evening, how singularly good for you was your bringing-up at Whitecliffe, and how much more amiable and agreeable than the rest of your family you became under her care."

"I can't help their flattering me," said Lesbia, pouting a little; "but of course I know that whenever anybody says anything at all complimentary to me, you and John only laugh at it."

"My dear, we would not if we could possibly help it,"

said John, stooping down and kissing the pretty flushed cheek. "If you will only manage to pick up admirers who can flavour their compliments a little more delicately, we will undertake to swallow them without so much grimacing; but at present, between Maynards and Pelhams, the incense offered is too coarse and overpowering for bystanders not to choke over it now and then. You certainly have not hitherto been fortunate in the intellect of your adorers."

"Ah," thought Lesbia, "if they only knew! There are people who can say and write flattering things of me in a great deal better words than John ever uses—real poetry; and they said and wrote them too long before I was rich, and admired me in my poor old washed-out muslin dresses; for whatever Mrs. Joseph tries to insinuate now, I never will believe that any hint of what was likely to happen had reached the Dalys when they sought me out and made so much of me."

She half turned her head away from John towards the open window, through which the March wind blew, freshly laden with the perfume of the hyacinths and violets in pots that filled the balcony; and as these thoughts arose the pouting lips parted and trembled into a smile, and the eyes grew very dark and glistening, and her hand involuntarily let fall the folds of her habit and strayed

upwards to touch a little bunch of green leaves that just peeped out from the bosom of her jacket.

"What have you got there?" asked John, on whom the sudden softening of the face had not been lost. "Let me see—shamrocks! Where did you get them? And what on earth put it into your head to ride out with a bunch of shamrocks in your bosom on St. Patrick's Day this year? You'll be taken for a Chartist."

"I don't care—there's no harm," cried Lesbia, startled, and blushing furiously. "I bought them of the old Irishwoman who sweeps the crossing at the end of Eaton Place; and, John, I've seen you give her a shilling yourself, though you do always say it's so wrong to give to beggars."

"An inconsistency in my behaviour which you think justifies you in getting yourself taken up by a special constable or cheered by a mob of Irish bricklayers. I hope your escort—that is he riding down the street, I presume—will enjoy the charge of you under the circumstances."

"My dear Lesbia, do give up your badge, if John thinks it likely to attract attention," said Bride anxiously.

"But it won't," Lesbia answered, giving the clump of faded leaves a hasty thrust inside her jacket-bosom. "No one can see it there without looking close. John only

remarked upon it because he is crosser than usual this morning. I noticed it the instant he came into the room.'

Bride's anxious eyes turned to her brother's face, and recognized the look of painful preoccupation and worry on the brow and in the eyes, that might always be observed in John as an accompaniment to the sharp, bantering talk that Lesbia voted crossness.

"I wonder whether there was a letter from Ireland among all those that came for him this morning," she said to herself, "and what there was in it to pain him so. I almost wish that some news would come to end it all quite. If she were fairly married to her rebel poet, he would be miserable at first, but it would be better for him in the end; and I suppose he would arrive in time at being able to see a three-leaved plant without speaking crossly and looking despair. What did possess little Lesbia to flourish the token in his face to-day? I have often enough given her hints to avoid Irish allusions as much as possible."

"There—I must go; they have all three ridden up to the door, and the groom has brought my horse round," exclaimed Lesbia, hastily gathering up the folds of her riding-habit again and running from the room. John followed to help her to mount, and caught her up in the hall, just as the servant, throwing open the door, disclosed a group of two

ladies and a gentleman on horseback drawn up before the kerbstone.

"I am glad," John remarked, "to see it is only Marmaduke Pelham and his sisters for the sake of whose company you have thrown Mrs. Maynard over on Bride. I was afraid it might be some new victim, and then I should have felt it my duty to remonstrate. Captain Pelham may look out for himself; he is old enough, and big enough, and obtuse enough, to release me from any responsibility however you may be intending to behave towards him."

Lesbia flashed an indignant look back at her brother as she ran down the steps, and before her friends greeted her found time to whisper energetically, "I would not be as clever as you are, John, for all the world, for you never can see anything else in other people but exactly how stupid they are; and you sneer—and you can't think how disagreeable it makes you."

"Yes, I can," John answered, with a sigh whose depth took Lesbia by surprise; "but don't put the sneering down to cleverness, I beg, for I assure you it savours much more of the opposite quality."

Captain Pelham had now alighted from his horse, and was begging leave to put Lesbia on hers, and John went round to shake hands with the two young ladies. While

they chatted with him, Lesbia bent down from her seat to put in a word, and something fell from her bosom.

"Oh my poor shamrocks, John!"

But Captain Pelham was beforehand with him in rescuing the green bouquet from under the horse's feet, and placing it, dripping with wet from the pavement, in the hand held out for it.

"Thanks, so many. I am afraid I shan't be able to wear my poor shamrocks again; but I should not have liked them to be actually trampled on, it would have been a bad omen for to-day."

"An omen very likely to be fulfilled, I should say," John muttered, quietly.

Meanwhile intelligent glances had been exchanged between Mary and Louisa Pelham, and they turned to John with simultaneous appeal for sympathy. "Now, is it not a most extraordinary thing," they exclaimed together, "how those two always do think and feel exactly alike on every point without speaking about it beforehand? Just do look at Duke's coat. He came downstairs with a bunch of shamrocks in his buttonhole this morning at breakfast-time, and Charlie and Fred, who, you know, went yesterday to be sworn special constables, threatened to take him into custody for a Chartist, and shook their staves at him; and papa was really a little annoyed, till

we explained that it must be in compliment to Lesbia's having sung 'The Wearing of the Green' so splendidly last night. Duke would not confess his reason, but now it's plain enough. I wonder which of them thought of it first."

"An interesting subject of speculation. I am inclined to believe that Lesbia's brain is capable of conceiving such an original idea as wearing a shamrock on St. Patrick's Day without assistance. You know best about your brother's."

"But Mr. Thornley, you must allow that it is a very odd fancy for them both to take up just now. You have heard, no doubt, that there is a kind of expectation abroad that something will happen to-day in Dublin like what went on in Paris last February. Troops have gone over, and constables and arms, and most likely there'll be barricades and fighting. I heard an old gentleman tell papa that St. Patrick's Day was a very likely day for the rebellion to begin, and that if it was so hundreds of people would be killed in Dublin before to-night. I wonder where our cousin Connor Daly is just now; he is a dreadful rebel, you know, and papa has lost all patience with him. Do you suppose there will be any news by to-night?"

"I don't expect it myself; but whatever news arrives it

will not, I hope, prevent your coming to us for Lesbia's ball to-night and enjoying yourselves."

"Oh dear no, thank you. We would not disappoint darling Lesbia for the world, and we are looking forward amazingly to her first ball this season. She is to wear her new emeralds. Nothing shall prevent our coming to see how she looks in them, we promise you."

"Not the deluge," John muttered to himself, as he remounted the stairs to the drawing-room. "I wonder whether it is really coming at once, or whether it is only the distant roar of the streams at the water-gates we are hearing this year. At all events, we are unready enough for anything to happen."

Bride was at the drawing-room window, looking after the riders, when John joined her.

"Lesbia certainly looks very pretty on horseback," she said, drawing her head back when the cavalcade had turned out of the square; and "Captain Pelham is what most people would call a fine-looking man. He would take her to live in the country, at Abbots Thornley, and she would settle down after all her little vanities and flirtations into a very happy popular Lady Bountiful. I wonder whether that is to be the solution of all our difficulties, the happy consummation that is to relieve us of our grandeur. This second spring will hardly pass

without her fate being settled one way or another. I hardly know what to wish."

"Can you answer it to your conscience, to wish that any human creature you have a regard for, should be condemned to Marmaduke Pelham's companionship for the rest of her mortal life?"

"He is dull, poor fellow, certainly; I was observing him at his mother's *conversazione* last night, and trying to look upon him as a possible brother. For two entire hours and a half, I calculated, he remained leaning with his back against a certain spot in the wall, and never speaking to any one."

"There was no harm in that; I should have comported myself in precisely the same manner, if I had been let alone."

"Of course you were not, people know you can talk, and seek you out. However, I don't believe that Marmaduke is more silent than his cousin, Pelham Daly; and I used sometimes to think that *his* silence and reserve were rather attractions to Lesbia than otherwise. It piqued her curiosity."

"It is not the silence *I* complain of, but the speech—and there is this essential difference between the cousins—Young Daly's remarks, when they do come, are not unfrequently to the purpose; Marmaduke's never. I have

even known a spark of actual Irish wit to have been struck out from young Daly, on due application of steel to his flint—that is to say, when his sister talks to him; but this other one is pure pudding-stone—you might hammer for ever and never get a light."

"But do you suppose Lesbia sees the difference? She does not value intellect as we do."

"The wiser she—it is a miserable idol to have set up."

"My dear John, at least wait till Mrs. Joseph Maynard has gone back to Whitecliffe, before you reverse your worship. I can't profess even to tolerate folly while she is with us."

"Is the coast clear of her now?—can I stay half an hour here with you in safety?"

"Most fortunately she has gone to call on a friend whom she does not consider grand enough to invite to Eaton Square, and she will not be back till twelve. To have you for half-an-hour's talk will be a rarely satisfactory beginning to my day."

"I don't know that I am going to talk, I feel more disposed to imitate Marmaduke Pelham, and stand with my back to the wall in silence for half an hour."

"You could do that as well downstairs. However, as you have established yourself in that niche of the window recess, put your head a little further back still, and look

out. I made a discovery when I was watering the plants yesterday, and I want you to share it. Can you see out far—across the trees, over the opposite house-tops, to the sloping roofs of some buildings in a back street beyond? There is an extra tall one, with three high twisty chimneys, and four attic windows, with dark-blue jalousies all in a row."

"What of them?"

"Don't they bring recollections to your mind? I knew them again in a minute, and went out last evening to make sure. The back street is Spring Street, and those attic rooms with the blue jalousies the apartments where we lived once for eighteen months. The last year you were at Westminster, when you were head boy and brought home such an armful of prizes, and poor mother cried so bitterly because she had nothing but bread and cheese to give you that day for dinner."

"Let me see; it was the year before she died. It is sixteen years ago, then."

"It feels like a century. I remember I used to make Eaton Square my way whenever I went on an errand, for the sake of looking up to the flowery balconies of the grand houses, and wondering what the people were like who lived inside. I was asking myself yesterday how I should have felt if a wise woman out of the 'Magic Ring,' my favourite

reading in those days, had shown me through one of the windows a vision of ourselves as we are now, inhabiting this room."

"Very much disappointed, I should say, if your castles in the air of that period at all equalled those with which I seasoned my bread-and-cheese dinners. I never doubted in those days that prosperity would come sooner or later, and I imagined her with a fairer face than she has shown me yet."

"I believe I should have been somewhat disgusted if I had seen myself as I look now; for a girl's castles in the air generally presuppose a little beautification, let her have in sober earnest ever such a poor opinion of her own looks; but, John, I think I should have been satisfied with what the years have done for you if I could have seen it then and understood as I do now. The outside circumstances, the riches and display, we two have very little to do with, and shall soon give up, but all that really graces our position, all the consideration worth having, is what you have won. I don't think that even when you first began to feel your own powers and be ambitious in those Westminster days when your first little triumphs were won, that you could have expected greater recognition and literary success than the two last years have brought you. Reasonably—or even unreasonably—you could hardly have expected more."

"No, but I expected something different from what the reality of this sort of success proves to be. It's the character of the work itself I am disgusted with—my own powers, as you call them, not what they have brought me. I believe it is the experience of those three years' active work in Ireland that makes bookwork, now I have come back to it, seem tame. I can no longer, as I once did, consider it the most glorious occupation in the world to put words judiciously together."

"As if that was what you do! but, however, I dare say it is best for you to be dissatisfied with your own doings. I am sure I would not have you

> 'Bow before the little Drop of Light
> That dim-eyed men call praise and glory here.'"

"It is a very dim little drop in my case."

"Oh, John, that's ambition, not humility."

"Or perhaps nothing more dignified than ill-humour and discontent."

"Will you own at once candidly that the discontent has a cause in the shape of a letter from Connemara among that bundle in your hand?"

"I have not had a line from anyone in that region of the world for months, I was going to say, but it is weeks. Anne O'Flaherty is much too ill to write, and there has been serious illness too at Eagle's Edge."

"Not Ellen?"

"No. The mother and Pelham—but both are recovering."

"How do you know all this, since you say you have had no letter?"

"If you choose to have particulars I will tell you. Yesterday I had to attend a committee of the House of Lords, where some evidence about the management of the funds employed in public works in Ireland was being heard. Among the witnesses a very quaint-looking old man attracted my attention by his odd likeness to Peter Lynch, and hearing him called Dr. Lynch, and finding he had come straight from Good People's Hollow, I introduced myself and finally brought him home to dine here, and kept him for the evening while you were at the Pelhams."

"Ah, I noticed that you shirked all but the last half-hour; but we had not left the house when you came in yesterday; why did not you introduce Dr. Lynch to me? I should like to have seen him. Is he Peter's brother?"

"No, a cousin. He was very communicative over the whisky and water that I ordered in after dinner, and confided to me his whole history: beginning with a romantic boyish devotion to Anne O'Flaherty, that had sufficient strength to make him struggle up, step by step, from being the poor scholar and genius of a hedge school in Good

People's Hollow, till he had succeeded in getting a doctor's degree in a Scotch University. The rest of the life does not correspond with the successful beginning. There was, I suppose, a great downfall of hopes, and a failure of purpose, when the devotion that had been such a spur failed of its object; and after that the man's talent and energy, of which he certainly has no common share, seem to have been exercised fitfully and very erratically. He has practised his profession in all parts of the world, in Japan, China, and the South Sea Islands, and was only settled in England six years ago, by a chance meeting at some seaside place with Mr. Daly, that revived all the old associations. He determined never to go beyond hearing of old friends again, and with the savings of his life bought a practice in Liverpool, which he threw up this last autumn, on getting a letter from his cousin Peter, imploring him, as a last hope of the people of the Hollow, to come back and save Anne O'Flaherty's life. They don't, he says, believe anything to be beyond the skill of the boy who left the place a poor scholar and comes back to it a travelled doctor, and Anne herself seems to trust him, and to have revived to a certain extent under his care. The famine fever gives plenty of exercise for his medical skill, and I suppose he has some funds left, at all events he does not seem to have any hesitation in obeying the call that brought him back

to end where he began. A faithful old spaniel, crawling back to die at his dying mistress's feet; one would not mind being such a spaniel oneself——"

"John!"

"You were wondering just now what the effect of seeing yourself as you are now would have been on yourself as a girl. All the time Dr. Lynch was talking to me I had an uncanny kind of feeling, as if it was the spectre of my own future self—myself of fifty years hence —that was talking with me, telling me the story of a restless disappointed life, with one strong feeling in it, supreme to the end."

"I don't believe you will let disappointment spoil your life. What brought the old man to London?"

"Anne sent him to give evidence of what he had seen during the winter in Connemara, hoping that his honesty and energy would be useful in clearing up misrepresentation. For my part, I am glad I have spoken with him. Since I have taken to write on Irish politics I must seize every opportunity of getting at information such as a man like this, trusted on all sides, can give."

"Hum!—of course he gave you news of the Dalys?"

"Pelham Daly has had a touch of the fever, and Mrs. Daly been seriously ill; but both are recovering."

"And how is Connor going on?"

"There was a little reserve in speaking of him. Dr. Lynch avoided public questions, so I suspect, old as he is, he is secretly in sympathy with Young Ireland, and I am a little afraid he is influencing Pelham Daly and Miss O'Flaherty to be less decided in their opposition to Connor's politics than is advisable for their own safety. That cousin of the Dalys, the poet whose verses you admired, and who is now editing one of the most rabid and dangerous of the Young Ireland newspapers, has I find been staying for weeks at a time during the winter with Miss O'Flaherty at the Hollow, and on one occasion, he and young Daly and the two O'Roones had a serious quarrel, which ended in a duel between Daly and Darby O'Roone, in which O'Roone was slightly wounded."

"They are very disreputable people, are they not, both father and son? Were they not concerned in that disgraceful case of ejection, where a whole village of fever-stricken people were turned out to die on the roads? You wrote a leader in the *Times* about it, did you not?"

"Yes, it occurred on some property which once belonged to the Dalys, and which old O'Roone purchased probably with money he cheated them out of in past times. I don't wonder at Pelham Daly's disgust and anger, but considering that he was brought up at Pelham Court, I should have

thought he might have found some less Irish way of gratifying his feelings than by shooting young O'Roone's little finger off."

"Was O'Roone's cruelty to his tenants the cause of the quarrel?"

"Not the final cause; I imagine there had been a great deal of irritation occasioned by Pelham's remonstrances and by O'Donnell's newspaper tirades attempting to stir up indignation against them throughout the country, and at last the three young men met accidentally in the coffee-room of the little hotel at Ballyowen, and some insolent speech of young O'Roone's provoked a blow from Pelham. It is most unfortunate. It secures the Dalys a vigilant enemy in their own neighbourhood, who is certain to seize the first opportunity Connor's imprudence gives him to gratify his revenge against the household at Eagle's Edge, while at the same time he will be furthering his own interest by making a display of zeal for Government in hunting out rebels. I wish I was there to keep an eye on events. I certainly should not have allowed the duel to have taken place if I had been at Castle Daly, and I think I could have prevented the ejectments."

"I think you over-rate your influence. My sincere belief is that we should do more harm than good this year at Castle Daly. Young O'Roone was always hanging

about Lesbia—calling at the Castle, and contriving to meet her on her rides. It was hinted to me once or twice that he gave himself airs as a favoured suitor."

"Why did not you speak to me?"

"I hardly thought it worth your notice; and to confess the truth, I did not like to acknowledge to you—as I must in honesty have done—that there had been something to blame in Lesbia's manner. She is a born coquette, poor child, and never can help playing off a complacent lover against a tardy one."

"By the tardy lover do you mean to allude to Pelham Daly? I thought you were convinced that there was no sort of attraction between him and Lesbia."

"My good friend, it was you who were *convinced.* If you will be so kind as to remember, I warned you about both brothers from the first. Lesbia has, I am sorry to say, so many ways of flirting that one is long in finding out what are the genuine symptoms in her case; but I am afraid this story of the duel throws considerable light on some vagaries in her behaviour that are puzzling me just now."

"But can she have heard of the duel?"

"I suspect she knows a good deal more of the rights of it than you do. Ever since we left Ireland she has kept up a fitful correspondence with the youngest of those tall,

gossiping Miss Joices, who live in the ivied house just outside Ballyowen, and who in spite of all my efforts managed to establish a good deal of intimacy with Lesbia while we lived at the Castle. The fire of letters backwards and forwards has been very active lately, and on one occasion I noticed that Lesbia came down stairs from the perusal of a thick budget with eyes positively swollen up with crying. Ever since there has been a change in her manner; she is snappy to her most obsequious adorers, and sings Irish songs with a greater degree of enthusiasm than the pleasure of provoking Sir Charles Pelham quite accounts for: and then the shamrocks this morning; how came she even to know that it was St. Patrick's Day?"

"If she reads the newspaper ever so carelessly, and interests herself at all in public events, she could not help knowing this year."

"But public events only interest Lesbia when private people she cares for are likely to be affected by them. That bunch of shamrock does not represent a political party in her eyes, you may be very sure, but that one of the young Dalys—whichever it may be—who occupies her thoughts at present. If by chance it was a boast concerning her favour on young O'Roone's part that provoked Pelham Daly's blow, then you may be sure he is the reigning hero. I am sorry to say it of her, but I am very much

afraid she belongs to the order of women who feel themselves glorified by being quarrelled over, and who, if pierced hearts were tangible things and could be strung together into ornaments like scalps, would like nothing better than to appear in chains and bracelets of them."

"Are not you judging her harshly?"

"I think not. I am perhaps putting the case strongly to counteract a purpose that I see growing in your mind. You are longing to carry us all back to Castle Daly, and I am determined you shall fairly see all the possibilities such a course involves."

"I could go there alone."

"Yes, but I want you here to help me through the rest of the London season in looking after Lesbia. How solemnly you spoke at first about guarding her from fortune-hunters. Don't you remember?"

"Yes, and I think it was you then who put in a word for giving fair play to her affections, and not interfering with her choice when it came to the point of her making one for herself. You know best how it is with her; but for my own part I wonder sometimes whether we did wisely when we took her from a place where she had some rational pursuits, and might have turned her money to some useful account at this time, to plunge her into the aimless dissipation she is following now. Is the advantage of her

ending her career by marrying Marmaduke Pelham so very manifest?"

"I think we were bound to show her something more of the world than that little corner of Connemara, before she was allowed to choose her future husband; remember she will have to keep him for life."

"I hope the choosing process won't go on indefinitely; she seems by some occult affinities to draw all the most inane young men in London together to choose from."

"They don't come to court you, sir, that's why you find them so inane. If you grumble I shall attribute your impatience to the same cause that made Goldsmith indignant with a crowd for looking at a pretty woman in a hotel window instead of at himself."

"I should not have thought, madam, that you would encourage the pretty woman to gather the crowd to look at her."

"Well, be patient, the dissipation is working its own cure. She is tiring of it herself. I can give you a proof. She has not said one word to me about her dress for this evening, or so much as looked at it, as far as my knowledge goes, since it came home."

"You call that something to be thankful for; and last year at this time she was content to lead a rational life without a thought of balls and ball-dresses, and had grown

so fond of country pursuits that you found it hard to drag her away. You ought to be ashamed of your work."

"Hum!—if country pursuits *had* been the attraction—but I know you choose to be blind, so where is the use of arguing? Let me have sufficient time for my experiment in my turn, and if I fail I will yield with a good grace. Give us your countenance for a few weeks longer, and then if Lesbia has not meanwhile become engaged to Marmaduke Pelham, and if she continues to give little wistful hints about wanting to return to Castle Daly, I promise to leave off throwing cold water on her plans, and frowning down her flattering attempts at confidences."

"She has been giving hints, and you have been frowning her down with a 'little hoard of maxims'—you strong-minded worldling."

"Yes, for the present; and I am sure I am right. If I had any confidence in the stability of her preferences, or if I knew for certain which of the young Daly brothers her thoughts turned to, I should be less implacable; but while, so far as I can make out, she is undecided between the two of them, and when one is such a harebrained young fellow as Connor, I am sure I do right in preventing her from giving her feelings shape by speaking of them. Imagine what it would be to have her engaged to a man, or rather a boy, of two-and-twenty, who was involved in a conspiracy, and

liable to be taken up and tried for treason, and hanged, or transported for life. She would think it very romantic for a month or so; but it would hardly be for her happiness. She had better be safe and dull with Marmaduke Pelham."

"But is it really a toss-up which of these three men she marries? I must say I don't profess to understand such gossamer feelings, and must leave the management to you. In such a case I should think it signified very little what happened."

"It signifies that she should get the most reliable man of the three for her husband; and in justice to Lesbia, I must ask you to remember that I am not describing her feelings, only my own state of puzzle about them. Perhaps she herself could give us a much more straightforward story of her heart if she chose. I wish to-night, for once in your life, you would come into the drawing-room to notice what is going on, instead of to draw a knot of men into a corner and talk politics. I want you to tell me your impressions of Lesbia's manner when we are alone."

Bride was almost sorry she had made the request, when, some hours later, a timid knock came to her bedroom door, and Lesbia entered, ready dressed for the evening. The first glance at her dress almost provoked Bride to exclaim —"So *that* was the reason you kept silent on the subject

of your ball-dress till it was on, and no time left for me to object?"

Then the thought rushed upon her, "It is Connor Daly she cares for then after all." And she was conscious that her countenance fell, and that she looked grave and disapproving, while Lesbia, with a conscious blush on her face, stood before her and shook out soft falling folds of white Limerick lace, fastened with green ribbons and bunches of shamrock, and further set off by pendants and sprays of emeralds set in trefoil shape, that glittered on her neck and arms, and peeped out among the coils of dark hair that encircled her head. It was "the wearing of the green" very daintily illustrated.

"I thought it would be a change from the sort of flowers and ornaments everybody wears," Lesbia hesitated, "and that it was appropriate to the day. You know John said once he thought it stupid of ladies to put so little meaning into their dress, and that it would be a good idea to illustrate days and seasons by what they wore. I wanted to please him by acting on his hint."

"My dear child," said Bride, quickly, "I was not thinking of finding any fault with your dress; there is no need to excuse it to me. I wish you could get over your Whitecliffe habit of making excuses for every single thing you do—it is quite unnecessary between sisters," and "never

answers the purpose of deceiving me," she would have added, if she had spoken out her thoughts to the end. Instead, she turned back to the looking-glass, and finished adjusting her own solid gold ornaments with very little perception of their effect on the black velvet dress John had presented her with for this occasion. As the door closed behind Lesbia a tear of compunction for her own ill-temper welled up, and when that was winked away, others, provoked by fast-occurring disturbing reflections, followed. What would all the Pelhams think of Lesbia's fanciful attire? This "wearing of the green" was almost a declaration of war against Sir Charles Pelham whose hatred of everything Irish had been wrought up to a pitch of ferocity by Connor's late conduct; and in Bride's anticipations it was equivalent to a *congé* to his son, Marmaduke Pelham, on whose solid character and steadfastness she was beginning to build her fairest hopes for Lesbia's happiness. As she went to the washstand to bathe her eyes, deeply ashamed of herself for running the risk at her age of coming among strangers with traces of tears on her face, she heard through the open window the loud voices of newsvendors in the square, crying the contents of the evening papers. "Latest news: The insurrection has broken out simultaneously in all parts of Ireland! Barricades—fierce fighting in Dublin streets! Great gatherings in the West."

It was probably only a *ruse* to sell the papers; but the very possibility of a time coming when some such announcement as that might bring terror and dismay into their household caused Bride's spirits to sink lower than they had done for many a day. She acknowledged within herself that it *was* deplorable selfishness to be deeply moved by public calamities mainly because the private concerns of friends were affected by them; but none the less did she wish ardently that Irish words and names were as unfamiliar to them all now as they would have been if disturbances in that part of the world had occurred sixteen years ago—when they were living in the attics in Spring Street.

It was some minutes before Bride's eyes could be pronounced to be in a condition to show down stairs, and meanwhile Lesbia in her green and white had the brightly-lighted ballroom all to herself. In another half-hour it would be crowded with guests. Rich people and titled people, who had been introduced to the Thornleys' acquaintance by their cousins the Pelhams—learned and distinguished people whom John's growing reputation attracted into their society—and more or less they would all pay court to little Lesbia. She would be the conspicuous object, observed by everyone, talked about by everyone, whose notice or neglect would make the pleasure or the

disappointment of the evening. She would see anxious faces relax and brighten if she came near, eager faces change if she turned away. This little allegory she was acting all by herself, without anyone's having the faintest clue to its real meaning; this enigma of her dress would give rise to a great deal of speculation to-night, and perhaps send some one or two people away from the house with really anxious hearts. Well, they deserved anxiety and disappointment, for courting her only now she was rich. No doubt they could not help the misfortune of never having known her poor; but since they had not that claim to her consideration, their possible annoyance was only matter for amusement. So far Lesbia's thoughts carried her with smiling lips and little tripping steps down the long room; then, as she drew near the window she paused, for a graver thought had arisen. There had been much secret pleasure in arraying herself in her green and white this day; but the people (she would not say the person, even low to her own heart) for whom she had thus dressed herself would never know the homage she was paying to the land where her treasure and her heart really dwelt. All at once the lights and flowers and gay decorations of the ballroom passed from her sight, obliterated by a mental picture at which she seemed to be gazing through a distant window—a low-ceilinged scantily-furnished room, filled with the

ruddy glow of a peat fire—soft night airs blowing through the casement,—a group gathered round the hearth,—a pale lady reclining on a couch,—a masculine figure seated by her side, and holding her hand. This figure seemed to be bent forward, as if the eyes were looking far away through the window towards her, and the firelight on the cheeks showed traces of illness and suffering. A girl on a low stool by the fire sat watching the other two, her cheek resting on her hand, and long coils of golden hair falling on her shoulders. They were all silent, dreaming out their thoughts apart, in the quiet twilight-hour after a busy day, but they were not thinking of her. Lesbia felt as if the sheen of her jewelled dress and the glitter around her shut her out as by a spell from a share in their sad thoughts. They could not know—for what should bring such a knowledge to them?—that one token of recollection, just a few moments of sharing in their sad life, would be worth, ah! so much more to her than all the splendour and the gaiety she lived among. She would not have believed that of herself a year ago, so how could *he* believe it? He might be ready to risk his life and make himself a dangerous enemy rather than hear her lightly spoken of; it was the recollection of the little Babette he had been kind to and defended from small troubles in old times that had prompted him to that action—but believe her capable of being as

generous to them as they had been to her was what it seemed he never, never would bring himself to believe. And since it was quite impossible to tell him this of herself, that great, great gulf of separation would always divide them. A voice from outside caught her ear at this point of her reverie: "Latest news—Fighting in Dublin Streets—Formidable risings in the West of Ireland." She ran out into the balcony, but the crier had already moved too far down the street for her to catch distinctly what he said; and she was just hurrying from the room with the purpose of despatching a servant in pursuit of him, when John, entering with a newspaper in his hand, intercepted her in the doorway. She seized his arm, and clung to it, pale and trembling. "Oh, John! you have got the newspaper—have you heard—is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"What they are crying in the street—the fighting—the West of Ireland?"

To her surprise John put his arm tenderly round her to support her, and kissed her cheek before he answered.

"No, no—nothing of the kind. It's a false report got up to sell the evening papers. I have certain information that all is going well. The morning has passed quietly in Dublin. And the open-air meeting, where it was feared disturbance might arise, has been postponed."

"But it will be held some day then?"

"It will pass off peaceably whenever it takes place, you may be sure. The postponement shows that the men who advocate violence either believe that the time for a rising has not come, or are wiser than their words, and don't mean to act upon them."

"For Dublin; but in the country—in the West?"

"There will be no rising without some signal from the leaders; and if I understand their tactics, they had rather not have it till after the harvest. I don't myself think it will ever be. One can't help being very anxious about one's friends, knowing that several of them are more or less implicated; but one hopes that even the insurrectionists may prove not to be utterly blind to the way in which events are tending, and that they will come to their senses before more harm is done."

"Ah! that is just what I think."

"You, Babette; why, how long have you turned politician?"

"I only mean that I never did believe, as Bride does, that there could be any danger in our going back to Connemara this summer, and," (dropping her voice), "I shall not be in the least afraid to travel with you to Castle Daly, and stay there for as long as you like, if you should

happen to want to go there on business at any time. My opinion about the Irish rebellion is just this—that I feel sure it never will turn to anything that need prevent our living again in Connemara."

"That is compressing the whole affair into a nutshell indeed," said John, smiling; but it was not at all a satirical smile. They were now walking up the room together, and he still kept his arm round Lesbia's waist, and was looking down at her with the playfully kind protecting expression in his eyes that Lesbia had thought belonged to Bride only, and would never be turned on herself. Then he touched her dress, and did not seem to feel the objection to it Bride had shown. "Irish lace, is it not?" he asked.

"Yes; I asked Nora Joice to buy it for me from Miss O'Flaherty's stores. I thought they—Miss O'Flaherty—would like that better than my sending money directly to her, and it was an excuse for writing again to Nora, whom I wanted to hear from." To her added wonder, this avowal, more confidential than any she had made to Bride, procured her another affectionate brotherly kiss on the cheek; then after a pause John said, "It was a good thought. You never, I suppose, write to or hear directly from Miss Daly?"

"Not now; I wrote twice during the winter, and she

never answered my letters. One does not like to have one's letters unanswered; and Bride says it shows they don't care to hear from me any more."

"A very natural conclusion to come to certainly."

Lesbia, who had been keeping her eyes well hidden under their long lashes, suddenly turned an appealing, imploring look up to her brother's face. "Was that his opinion too? Did he really think it?" Eyes met eyes, and each pair read something in the other that opened a way to sympathy and community of interest such as had not been dreamed of hitherto; and Lesbia, losing all thought of her laces and jewel pendants, threw her arms impetuously round her brother's neck. "Dear John, we will go to Ireland together, even if there is ever such a dreadful rebellion," she whispered; "and I do believe—I really do—that when we are there, people won't be able to help being a little glad to see us."

The first loud knock at the street-door coming at the end of Lesbia's speech saved John from the embarrassment of a reply, and sent Lesbia fluttering up to the mirror at the far end of the room to shake out her crushed flounces before it, and satisfy herself by a furtive glance into its depths that the colour had come back into her cheeks, and that none of the elaborate plaits and bows, and jewel sprays on her little head, had been disarranged during her moment or

two of self-forgetfulness. John watched her during these proceedings, and again once or twice in the course of the evening, with some wonder. Could it be the same girl, whose wistful glance had a few minutes ago seemed to give him a glimpse into a heart full of tender feeling and humble unexacting love? Which was the real Lesbia—the loyal-hearted maiden he had newly discovered, or the bright, mischievous-eyed coquette, whose vivacity and caprices kept the attention of a dozen admirers happily on the alert? In order to fulfil his promise to Bride, John gave a greater amount of attention to the passing events of the evening than was his wont. He saw Marmaduke Pelham enter the room with the bored, injured expression on his face that the prospect of spending three or four hours in company indoors usually brought there, and he observed how these looks of constraint and annoyance were mitigated and then vanished altogether under the influence of the five, ten minutes, quarter of an hour's chat which Lesbia, in interludes of livelier flirtations with more eager admirers, contrived to bestow upon him. This was carrying coquetry too far, John opined, as he watched the honest foolish face softening and brightening till it actually glowed with pleasure, while the treacherous glib-talk went on. Lesbia ought to know when feelings were too real to

be played with, and should be able to respect them. Once, when the pair had disappeared from the ballroom fully twenty minutes, John took it upon himself to make a tour of the anterooms and staircase, taking in his wake a spectacled young savant, a special pet of his, with a view of presenting him to Lesbia as a suitable partner for the next quadrille, and so breaking up the dangerous *tête-à-tête*. Marmaduke Pelham's towering head and broad shoulders were soon discerned behind a stand of plants that half filled a window-recess on the upper landing; but there was a press of people ascending and descending the staircase, and John and his friend were swayed backwards and forwards by the crowd, sometimes approaching so near the recess that they could not avoid hearing scraps of the conversation of its occupants, and sometimes obliged to move aside to let others pass. The two voices were eager and confidential, though by no means low, and the sentences that reached John's ears were hardly such as he expected to hear. "Oh, yes," in Lesbia's voice, "I remember there *was* a white thorn near the gate; but no one ever told us it had been planted by Mr. Daly when Ellen was born. We moved it and put an arbutus there instead. I see you know the garden as well, if not better, than I do." "My cousin Ellen was always describing it to me—that time when they spent a whole summer at

Pelham Court just after I left college." "That must have been quite a year and a half before I first saw them." A movement in the crowd carried John further off, and when he was again within earshot but pinned against the wall by a barricade of ladies' skirts, a fresh subject had been started. Captain Pelham had actually taken a fold of Lesbia's dress between his fingers.

"Yes," he was saying, "I know the look of this sort of stuff very well. My cousin Ellen wore a dress of it one St. Patrick's day when they were with us; there's nothing prettier in the world, only she had real shamrock to loop up the gathers or whatever you call them, and I got it for her. By Jove, how well I remember it! She made me go out half a dozen times before she would allow that I had gathered the right things."

"I remember Ellen Daly's Limerick-lace dress, too. She wore it the very first evening I ever spent with them at Whitecliffe, at a little party given for Mr. Pelham Daly's coming of age. I had never been to a dance before in my life, and how I did enjoy it! I made up my mind then that if I ever had a house of my own, and gave a ball in it, I would wear a dress exactly like Ellen Daly's."

"But, somehow——It's a first-rate dress, this of yours, and looks splendiferous indeed—yet I don't know that it

is altogether equal to that one I remember. It does not fall exactly in the same way, or look so floating like a cloud, or wings, or—I don't know what—a kind of effect that one can't get out of one's head again when one has once seen it."

"Lesbia!" cried John, struggling to the front at last, "I have been hunting you for ten minutes; several people are inquiring after you, and I have brought Professor Fletcher, who wishes to be introduced to you for the next quadrille."

The two behind the flower-screen, started apart as if a bomb had fallen between them. Captain Pelham sprang upright, colouring furiously, and stood twisting his gloves into a tight-rope as if he were required instantly to wring a supply of water for the plants out of them. Lesbia recovered herself in an instant and sailing from the shelter of the flower-stand, executed a stately little curtsey to Professor Fletcher, followed by an elaborate consultation of her tablets, during which she contrived to intimate her surprise at John's ignorance in supposing that her hand for a dance could be obtained at the expense of so very little forethought. "The next quadrille—the next four or five dances were, she was sorry to say, out of the question; but she should be most happy to see what she could do—perhaps No. 19—it would be after supper; but——"

"At least come back into the ballroom," cried John, impatient.

Lesbia condescended to follow him, but paused on the threshold of the crowded room. "The music was beginning, and there was no use," she said, "in going in till her partner turned up, he would most likely come to look for her, and if not, she was sure Professor Fletcher would prefer waiting in the cool anteroom, and John might go and tell Bride where she was if he liked."

John retired, convinced of his incapacity to deal with ballroom tactics, and Lesbia stood fanning herself in the doorway, and occasionally throwing disjointed sentences over her shoulder at the discomfited Professor, who began to wish heartily that he had not said anything to his friend about wishing to dance. This disdainful jewelled little lady was a more formidable partner than he had anticipated.

One or two gentlemen came up to invite Miss Maynard to dance; and Lesbia again consulted her tablets. The name was rubbed out, but—she was quite sure she was waiting for somebody—and if he did not appear soon, her brother had brought her a partner——

"Who won't be wanted, for the right one you're waiting for, without knowing it, is here at your elbow, and dying with impatience while you talk of waiting."

There was again a crowd in the doorway coming out of the ballroom, and some one leaned forward between two ladies and whispered these words into Lesbia's ear. Lesbia looked back, hardly able to suppress a cry of astonishment, and met Connor Daly's laughing eyes fixed admiringly on her. The next moment he was by her side shaking hands eagerly, and drawing her fingers under his arm to lead her off. "Come this way back into the ballroom; we'll get a seat behind the dancers, where we'll be as quiet as if we were on the top of the hill behind Castle Daly, and have our talk out. I've been here an hour watching for an opportunity to speak to you. You loveliest darling of the world, I do believe you have been waiting for me. You have, indeed put 'the green above the red' triumphantly for me to-night."

"Connor, how dare you!" cried Lesbia, trying to withdraw her hand from his arm, "how dare you speak so to me?"

"I'll beg your pardon on my bended knees if you like; but it's the green and white that's too much for me altogether. To see you 'wearing the green' to-day! What can I do, but go mad with joy and triumph!"

"But I hope you won't. I want to hear about them all at home. I want you to let me stay and talk."

"Let you, you preciousest jewel of the world that ever wore Old Ireland's colours. Let you?"

"But I can't stay with you if you talk nonsense. I shall be obliged to go to Bride and tell her you are here; and there are so many questions I long to ask."

"Sit down just here, then, behind this fat old lady's back and begin. Lac-y-Core itself would hardly be better shelter for us; and I vow there sha'n't come a sound from my lips to vex you, if I have to bite out my tongue to keep the loving words back. You can't hinder my eyes from seeing, thank the powers."

"You're not changed, Connor," said Lesbia, after looking at him for a minute, with a sort of soft inquiry in her eyes, quite emptied for that minute of their coquettishness. "You are just the same dear absurd boy you used to be at Whitecliffe, for all that has happened to the others."

"That is all you know about it, Miss Maynard. I the same as I was at Whitecliffe a hundred years ago! I indifferent to all that is happening in Ireland! If you really knew how it is with me you would not grudge me the spurt of high spirits that nothing on earth but the sight of you looking kindly at me, and wearing the colours that show where your heart is, could have given me. I'll make up for it fast enough when the evening's over. Don't grudge my being happy this one night."

"Indeed I don't, I only want to know how you come to be here. They are some of them ill at home, are not they?"

"My mother has been ill, and Pelham; but they are recovering. I have not been home very lately. Ellen said I should only be another anxiety; and you know I am supposed to be studying in Dublin for the Irish bar."

"Then why are you here in London?"

"You ask me that?"

"Why should not I ask you?"

"You did not send for me, your own most generous, kindest-hearted, beautiful self."

"I send for you, Connor—what can you mean?"

"There, sit down again—don't burn me altogether to cinders with your angry looks—and I'll tell you what happened, and you shall say whether I was so very far wrong in supposing your kind hand was in it, knowing as I do that you are with us in your heart. You must have heard that there has been a talk of sending delegates from our party to Paris, to congratulate the Provisional Government on the success of the Revolution in France. Smith O'Brien was to be the chief, but several names of younger men were mentioned as likely to be chosen as his colleagues, and one of the newspapers named me. I am not thought such an absurd boy among the boys at Conciliation Hall, I can tell you."

"You are all absurd boys together there, John would say."

"I don't suppose I should have been chosen, however; the meeting was to have been held to-day, and has been postponed; but two days ago, the day after my name had been printed in the *Nation* as a possible delegate, I had a letter, inclosing a ten-pound note, and purporting to be from a friend who wished to save the Association the expense of my journey to Paris, and requesting in return that I would come up to London the day before the meeting, and await my associates there. I took the letter to D'Arcy O'Donnell and told him——"

"That you thought it came from me."

"Don't be angry; he is the closest friend I have in the world, and could not be that without having heard of you. Besides, he stayed in Connemara for six weeks, between the Hollow and Eagle's Edge, and got to care for us all like a brother, or better, and has had your name brought up to him oftener than you may suppose. He advised me to obey you, feeling sure that you had a good reason for the command you sent, and that, Englishwoman as you are, you are true to the cause in your heart. Besides, he was quite sure I should lose nothing by coming, for there would be no fighting to-day; so I came,—and now I'm here, you won't tell me you did not send for me? The letter had a London postmark, and the handwriting was like yours, a little disguised."

"Then it was John who wrote it. He reads all the Irish newspapers, and he was very anxious, I know, about the expected disturbances to-day. He wanted to lure you out of the way of getting yourself into a scrape. Not for your own sake, no, nor for mine—of that I can assure you —but to shield your people at home from additional troubles on your account; he thinks they have enough already."

A cloud of disappointment and vexation passed over Connor's face, and then, recovering himself, he burst out laughing. "Well, I've been duped; but, after all, the best of the bargain remains with me. I've lost none of the fun in Dublin, and as I've got the money I'll go to Paris with the delegates, and see what successful revolutionists look like; and if after that, and the sight I'm having to-night, I let myself, through any one's stratagem, be kept out of the thick of the real fighting when it comes, you may say what you like of me, for I shall deserve it."

"Connor, you really must believe that I did not know of your coming, and do not wear this dress to encourage you in the schemes that John says are mad and wicked."

"What do you wear it for, then?"

"One can love Ireland, as Ellen and Mrs. O'Flaherty do, without wanting people to fight."

"I don't call it loving a country to see her trampled

upon and *not* want to fight. You don't sympathize with us then, after all?"

"It was only your own imagination that ever made you think I did. You wrote verses about my sympathizing with you, and I only read them."

"It's very hard on a fellow to be lifted up to the height of hope, and then thrown down again. Babette, a minute ago, I thought you loved me."

"Hush, the music has ceased, and the old lady has turned her head round to listen to what we are saying. Let me take you to Bride."

"No, no, I will have it out with you now we have begun. I must know the truth, and besides I would not have your brother see me here for worlds; he shall never know I was taken in so easily. Does not that large window at the end of the room open on to a balcony? Let us go there while the crowd pass on to supper." The balcony proved to be empty when they gained it. Connor leaned against one of the iron pillars, and Lesbia stood and looked up at him quite unembarrassed, not even troubling herself to pull to pieces the leaves of the creepers near her.

"Babette," he began, "I did think you loved me. Ever since those old Whitecliffe days I have thought so. I don't mean that I'm a fit match for you—of course I know

I'm not—but I'm not a fool exactly, and I intend, and always have intended, to make myself something you could be proud of in the end. I believed you'd take me on trust for the present, because I always thought you loved me."

"Yes, Connor, I know you did," Lesbia answered; "I know you thought so in the old Whitecliffe days; but that was not your loving me."

"Not loving you! I not love you? What can you mean? Why, from the very first moment I saw you, I thought you the sweetest, brightest, dearest, most delightful little girl in the whole world."

"Yes, but——"

"What more would you have?"

"Nothing more—not so much from you, dear Connor; only that you should leave off thinking anything about love, and let us be true friends. I have been to blame, for I used to want everybody to be in love with me; but I am changed now. I am tired of lovers, and I want you for a friend to whom I can talk comfortably, and who will help me."

"That's all! And you stand there smiling and holding out your hand as if you did not even believe that what you say is a terrible disappointment, when I really do love you so much, and was so sure that you cared about me, at least a little, in the other way."

"That was a pity; but friendship is better than nothing, is it not? and we can be good friends."

"Tell me the whole truth. Is it that you think Pelham loves you better than I do?"

"Good evening, Mr. Connor Daly; I am going into the house."

He caught her dress as she was disappearing through the window. "Babette, dear Babette, don't go away angry with me. We are friends if you like, and I will never say another word to vex you as long as I live."

"Then let us shake hands, and come into the house to supper."

"No, not yet. Come back to the end of the balcony; I have something else to say to you, something that O'Donnell advised me to tell you, though we thought then that it would be a good deal easier for me to speak than I shall find it now. Yes—come; it's nothing about myself, so you may as well listen."

They walked to the far end of the little balcony; but Connor crossed his arms on the parapet, and took a long look down into the street before he entered on his new subject.

"Babette," he began, "looking up at last, "the hardest part is, that as you won't believe how much I love you, you won't give me credit for being as generous as I really

am in telling you the story I have brought you here to hear. You'll never know what an effort it costs me to put away my last chance with my own hands, and quite give you up, by telling you this—for I know it's just that I shall be doing."

"I thought you were not going to talk about yourself."

"Only those few words; and I think you might be kind to a fellow who feels he is cutting the last inch of ground from under his feet, and who is sore and bruised enough with one fall already."

"Dear Connor, when you think it over you will see I am right; but you said we were not to discuss that again."

"I will make myself of consequence to Ireland if I am not to you, and some day you sha'n't be ashamed of having had me for your first lover; for, Babette, I did love you first—long before Pelham began to take any notice of you. But now I'll go on to what you'll care to hear. I meant to tell it you when I was sure of you—when the pleasure you would take in it would be pride in the brother I was giving you. Babette, Pelham has had a chance that I would have given the world for, of punishing a fellow who spoke disrespectfully of you, and complained publicly that you had jilted him after giving him good reason to think you cared for him. D'Arcy was present when the quarrel took place, and says that no one could

have behaved better than Pelham all through. The other was such a vulgar low fellow, he deserved nothing but the thrashing he got on the spot; but Pelham accepted his challenge rather than that any one should have occasion to say he was not ready to abide by all the consequences of his interference. I had not even the chance that I think he might have given his own brother of going out with him; he took D'Arcy for his second, and I never heard a breath of it till it was all over. It happened a day or two before Pelham was taken ill of the fever."

"Yes, I know; you need not tell me any more. I heard all about it three weeks ago."

"Who could have told you? We thought we kept the duel very close; and as for the other side, they cut such a poor figure, I should have thought they would have held their tongues."

"Such things always get talked of, I suppose. Nora Joice wrote me the whole story, my share in it as well as the rest."

"So in all this business I'm not even to have the glory of cutting my own throat. Somebody else finished off my chance, it seems, before I even knew it."

"You are mistaken, Connor, if you think that hearing this story has changed in the slightest degree my thoughts of any one but myself. I was more ashamed and unhappy

than I had ever been in my life before when I heard it, for I knew it was my vanity that had obliged some one to risk his life to save my name from being lightly spoken of, but it did not alter my way of thinking of any one else."

"You mean to say that you don't like old Pelham at all the better for his pluck in punishing the man who slandered you. Well, it would be odd if I were to begin to speak up for him to you, but I must say I don't understand your not being the least touched or grateful.

"I did not say that."

"Babette, I think I see what is the only other thing you can mean, but I sha'n't say it, or else you'll run away from me again. If you do not like him the better for that, it must be because——"

"You said you would not say it."

"Then shake hands upon it. It's all over with me, and I give in, and I'll do my best not to grudge you to Pelham, for he has behaved very well to me since he has been the head of the house, and been friendly to D'Arcy, which counts for a great deal with me. I would not have believed this could happen in the old Whitecliffe days, but I'm not going to imitate Darby O'Roone, and complain of the sweet ways that ought to make every one who sees you proud to love you, and ready to serve you all his life for nothing."

"No, not for nothing, Connor; we are always to be the best friends in the world, you know; and supposing that your guess is true, don't you see I have let you know more about my thoughts than any one else in the world? I have trusted you."

"You have trusted me and you shall never repent it. Don't be angry, dear; that one kiss on your hand Pelham himself would not grudge me. It was to seal beforehand a bargain we have to make. I meant to ask it as a favour, but now it's you that'll thank me, I expect, for coming to you. I did not tell you the story of the duel for nothing. I wanted some one I could trust, and whose heart I thought was with us, to know the danger that Pelham is in from having made an enemy of Darby O'Roone. Darby has sworn to be revenged, and D'Arcy and I know, though through such secret ways that we can make no use of our knowledge, that he has set spies to work, and is plotting to convict Pelham of acting secretly for us; and by and by, if there is a rising, and things should go wrong, which is just possible, he will be prepared with what will pass for evidence against Pelham. We are ready to take the risk of failure and of all that will follow; we think that anything is better than letting our people die tamely, or submit to be packed in gangs and sent from their own land across the seas; but we don't

want to have others dragged in to share the danger against their will. You see, it's my mother I'm thinking of. It would be hard on her to have Pelham touched; I don't count for so much with any one, it seems, and should have no scruple in going in for anything that may turn up, if only he were secured from being involved in danger with me."

"But oh, Connor, surely if he does keep clear—if he has nothing to do with your conspiracies, he cannot be brought into danger."

"Do you suppose there were no innocent people imprisoned and hanged after '98?—no spies then like O'Roone, who succeeded in wreaking their private revenge under cover of zeal for Government? Have not you learned so much Irish History as that from Ellen and me?"

"Dear Connor, tell me what you think I can do. Imprisoned!—hanged! Oh, I did not know it was such dangers as those you were thinking of."

"Of course we don't mean it to be like '98 over again; we hope to succeed this time, as the French have done; but I for one shall go in for it with a gayer heart if I can secure that, whatever happens to us, O'Roone's spite will be balked of its gratification; it was mainly to trust that part of the business to you that I came here to-night."

"Tell me what I can do—and indeed, indeed——"

"There, there, don't tremble so and turn pale, or I don't know how I'll ever be able to bear it without offending you again. Why, how your eyes shine, Babette, as if I had asked you to face a dozen mad bulls, or march up to a scaffold; I believe you'd do it, and who would have thought it of you, who used to cry at getting your feet wet? Pelham's a luckier fellow than even I knew, and how I'll ever keep myself from grudging him his monstrous happiness goodness knows."

"Oh, Connor, can't you go on being serious till you have told me what you want me to do?"

"I am as serious as the grave, and don't know that I shall ever be anything else after the blow you have given me, Babette. What I want of you is only to go back to Castle Daly, and keep your brother there till the end of the summer. I can promise you that whatever happens, let the rising spread to whatever dimensions it may, neither you nor he, nor any one belonging to you, shall be in any danger. I want your brother there to secure the presence of one honest witness to the part Pelham takes; some one who will discriminate fairly between encouraging disaffection and his efforts to protect the poor wretches whom O'Roone, for his own purposes, is hunting from their homes. Of course the wretches are most of them with us. How would they not be? But I believe your brother, even

at such a time as this, will be just enough not to confuse common humanity with disaffection to Government. What with deaths and desertion, there is no one left of any standing in the neighbourhood, except ourselves and the O'Roones; and whichever way events fall out, Darby will have no other object but to scrape out some advantage to himself and some ill to his enemies through all."

"How I hate to think that I ever let him believe I tolerated his flattery."

"Well, Babette, when you count up your rejected lovers and flatterers, don't put me in the same list with Darby O'Roone, that's all I ask. I don't say I've never tried to put a bit of the blarney over you for fun, but it was only the words that were froth; there was the real thing, strong and sound, underneath, though you don't choose to believe it. Hark! there's the music beginning again. Some one will come to look for you in a minute. I suppose I had better say good-bye; and you'll give me your hand to kiss again, I know."

"Won't you stay a little longer and see your aunt and uncle and cousins? They are all here to-night."

"Not for worlds—the only pleasant thought I'll ever get out of this evening will be the recollection of how skilfully I dodged them the hour and a half while I was waiting to get hold of you. I stood in the shade of

that statue for at least ten minutes, and heard my uncle Charles entertain that old man there in a wig with his opinion of his Irish relations, and of Young Ireland, as represented by his nephew, Connor Daly."

"That tall gentleman is a Privy Councillor."

"Then he knows Uncle Charles's receipt for governing Ireland, and devoutly I hope he will get it acted upon, so as to give us a chance. You're not afraid, Babette. You know you'll be safe at Castle Daly whatever happens. I take it that you've promised me to go there."

"For Ellen's sake and your mother's."

"Yes, yes, that's understood; it's my mother of course you go to take care of. Even you can't get along without the blarney, you see, Babette, after all."

"Oh, Connor, when I've let you say and guess more than I shall dare to think of—when I have trusted you so——"

"And destroyed me altogether."

"You'll go to Paris to-morrow, and forget it all."

"I sha'n't; I shall go back to Dublin, and but for the thought of the fighting that's coming, I'd be ready to hang myself. However, there is that to look forward to, and D'Arcy—and I'll go in for it all now with a free heart. Now give me your hand quick, there's your brother coming to look for you." Connor pressed his lips fervently on the little hand held towards him, and then retreated into the

furthest shade of the balcony, while Lesbia went forward to meet John in the window opening.

"No, dear John," she said sweetly; "I have not been down to supper yet; but I should like to go now with you, if you will be so good as to take me." Her floating white skirts nearly filled the window, but while she slipped her hand under his arm, John managed to glance round among the shrubs, and caught sight of a coat-tailed figure, leaning over the iron rails and gazing intently into the street. "One of Lesbia's numerous lovers." He was too much annoyed to risk losing his temper by further investigation. "She is an arrant coquette," he said to himself, with a sigh. "Bride is right; she cares only for conquest. We are bound to watch over her carefully, and not lose any chance that offers of giving her into respectable safe keeping. Marmaduke Pelham has certainly a peculiar method of love-making; but I suppose it is love he is making to her, and for the future I will be more careful not to show him how much he bores me."

CHAPTER IV.

"From you I have been absent in the Spring,
When proud pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him;
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer story tell,
Nor from their proud lap pluck them where they grew."

SHAKESPEARE.

LESBIA's first experience of the fact, that riches sometimes take the shape of fetters, holding their possessors back from the attainment of their wishes, came to her as she lay in bed late on the morning after the ball, too tired to get up, and too restless to go to sleep again. The sunshine streaming through the closed shutters was reflected in long green rays from a little heap of trinkets on the dressing table, where she had wearily thrown them on undressing last night, and conspicuous, just in the level streak of light on the floor, lay one of the bouquets of shamrock from her lace dress, that had caught on an

orange tree, and been torn away when she turned from Connor in the balcony. The whole scene rushed back on her memory, and she sat up in bed, bent her face down on her hands, and mentally acted it all over again, word by word. She had never, she thought, liked Connor half as well before as she did now, when he understood more of what lay at the bottom of her heart than anyone else in the whole world. Ah, yes, and Lesbia's face, under the shelter of her clasped hands, and in the solitude of her own room, grew crimson at the thought. Ah, yes, more than that other person should ever know or would care to know. This secret alliance with Connor seemed a great gain, it as good as gave her a brother nearly of her own age, whom she need not be afraid of. A brother very unlike John—yet, how kind John had been, when he had put his arm round her, and spoken of returning to Connemara—what a curious new look had come into his eyes! Help to keep her last night's promise to Connor might be reckoned upon securely from that quarter, Lesbia felt sure, and smiled to herself, as all that was implied in John's willingness to aid her grew clear to her mind. John in love!—who would have thought it!—all his learning and the talents of which Bride was so proud, not having saved him from being as silly as herself. So far the way looked tolerably clear, but from this point difficulties in the shape

of social duties began to start up. A week or two ago these same prospects would have been counted pleasures, now they appeared wretched mean hindrances, standing in the way of the one thing in the world she really cared to do:—engagements for balls and pleasure-parties, made with this and that grand acquaintance; proposed visits from dear friends; plans for constant meetings, and exchange of gaieties entered into with the Pelhams—and behind all these lay the worst hindrance of all, a certain cold disapproving expression that was sure to come over Bride's face whenever either she or John ventured on any remark that had a latent design of proving the superiority of Castle Daly to any other residence. How could Lesbia approach her sister while she was in this mood, and propose such a startling plan as that they should give up their London house at the beginning of the season, and abandoning all engagements, go off suddenly to Connemara, where people had nothing to eat, and were dying by thousands of fever, and were expected soon to begin cutting each other's throats by way of change of suffering? There was not one good or even plausible reason to assign for such a proceeding, except that secret one which Lesbia thought her lips could no more speak out to Bride, than her shoulders could put forth wings to carry her across the sea. If only a plausible motive for breaking her intimacy with the

Pelhams should arise, Bride might accept that as sufficient explanation for giving up the remaining gaieties of the season. It would certainly be awkward to be perpetually meeting people one had offended irrevocably. As these last thoughts crossed Lesbia's mind, she lifted up her head, put her tumbled hair away from her hot forehead, and rang the bell for her maid to dress her. Perhaps it might not be correct or maidenly to wish to receive an offer from a man she did not love and meant to refuse, just for the sake of affording her an excuse for leaving a place she was tired of, and going where her heart was (Lesbia acknowledged all this to herself); Bride would be shocked at such a design; but when one is a coward, and is driven into a corner, and above all, when the welfare of the person one secretly loves depends on one's movements, one cannot afford to be curious about expedients, but must be satisfied to adopt the readiest that comes to hand. And after all, this expedient was less objectionable than might be thought at first sight. Its only aim was to draw rather quickly to a conclusion a sham courtship, that had no heart in it on either side, and that yet had gone so far as to necessitate some sort of explanation to end it. A little manœuvring to bring the crisis at once was surely no great matter.

"Yes," Lesbia said to her maid, who was by this time plaiting her hair before the glass, "I will be dressed in my

habit, and go down to breakfast, ready for my ride. The Miss Pelhams always ride the morning after a ball, and I will send round a little note to beg them to call for me."

"And I will see that the note goes at once, Miss," the maid answered with a meaning simper that, reflected in the glass, caught Lesbia's eyes, and brought a flush of vexation and shame to her face, but did not induce her to alter her purpose.

John was puzzled and Bride triumphant at the increased inclination for the Pelhams' society Lesbia showed during the fortnight that succeeded the ball. She had always received the attentions of the family graciously, but now she appeared to have no interest in any engagement in which they were not included.

"Can you understand it, John?" Bride asked one evening when she caught her brother alone at the end of a day on which she had martyrized herself by acting chaperone to Lesbia on a water party to Richmond with the Pelhams. "Can you understand the new attitude of affairs between Babette and Captain Pelham? She has abandoned all her former flirtations, and keeps close to the Pelhams wherever we go; and just as she is become more satisfactory, when the mother and sisters can hardly speak of her without tears of admiration and happiness in their eyes, the young man himself appears to be drawing back.

Lady Pelham has been talking to me all the way home as if it were a settled thing; and yet I observed that though Captain Pelham walked by Lesbia's side, and went in the same boat, he hardly spoke a word to her; and when one of his sisters called on him to perform some little service, he gave her a look that was absolutely savage. It surely cannot be that her inclination has outrun his! It would never do to have our poor little beauty throwing herself at any man's head. I had rather a thousand times that she married Connor Daly."

"You may set your mind at ease; I think I can give you a satisfactory explanation of any strangeness there may have been in Marmaduke's manner to-day. He was in an awkward position. I can hardly imagine anything more uncomfortable than passing a day in company with a young lady to whom one has pledged oneself to make an offer at a specified time that is not just then."

"What do you mean? Has Captain Pelham been talking to you?"

"He joined me last night when I was leaving the House, after hearing Smith O'Brien speak, and late as it was, kept me pacing up and down before this door above an hour talking of his plans and hopes about Lesbia."

"Indeed! Were you satisfied? What did he say?"

"Talking is not his *forte*, as you know. The conference

lasted an hour, certainly; but I fear the impression left on my mind at the end as to what had been actually said was somewhat hazy. I gathered, however, that his regiment is ordered immediately to Ireland; that his father wishes him to sell out, not to interrupt his courtship of Lesbia, but will sanction his remaining in the army till all prospect of disturbance is over, if he can bring his affairs in that quarter to a conclusion at once. The mother and sisters are not to know anything of the destination of the regiment at present, lest they should insist too strenuously on the selling out. He himself has what appears to me a singularly exaggerated idea of Lesbia's good sense, and is willing to leave the decision of his future course in her hands if she accepts him."

"But his feelings! Did it strike you, from what he said, that he was properly in love with her?"

"On that point I decline to give an opinion. His admiration of her good sense implies a considerable amount of infatuation; yet, on the other hand, he questioned me so anxiously on the likelihood of her having another attachment that I half suspected he was searching about for an excuse for not offering himself. Lesbia will find out what he means by a happy instinct, I trust. Such intricacies are beyond me."

"I wonder why he did not speak to her to-day."

"He is coming here to-morrow morning; I begged for the delay. I want to prepare the child—to warn her not to be hurried into a decision because people are expecting it of her."

"But if the decision is a wise one, why should not the expectations of older heads have due weight? I suspect that some of the happiest marriages are settled so. I hope I am not very worldly-minded, but when I think of the tranquil safe life that being taken into such a worthy family as the Pelhams will secure to Lesbia, and compare it with the agitation and risk that an attachment to such a man as Connor Daly would inevitably bring, I can't help feeling that a little gentle persuasion may be allowable."

"How much you women think of safety, as if mere freedom from emotion were the great boon to be asked of life! —secure eating and drinking, and sleeping and dressing, a life of unbroken routine! Is that such a desirable fate in your eyes that you would force it on your friends?"

Bride came close and put her hands on his shoulders. "It's very cowardly, I acknowledge; but women don't reach my age without having suffered enough from excess of emotion to have learned to sum up nearly all that is desirable as to earthly feelings in the words 'rest and peace.' I suppose that is why the blessed invitation, 'Come unto Me,

and I will give you rest,' sounds more inviting to women than to most men."

"I don't know about that. The rest of full satisfaction is a very different thing, remember, from the rest of acquiescence in mediocrity."

"I believe my wishes for Lesbia are faithless. Yet I think there must be some other ground for the difference of our opinions on this matter. I think you are a little perversely prejudiced against Captain Pelham. He is by no means such a fool as you are fond of making him out to be."

"Perhaps I am prejudiced."

"Don't be angry with me for asking, but did you not suspect at one time that he was in love with Ellen Daly?"

"Yes, I did."

"You despise him for transferring his affections from her to Lesbia."

"Not at all. I should only be too glad if I were certain that the transfer were genuine. I suppose some instinct enables one to divine what is in another person's mind when one has a strong feeling in common. Last night Captain Pelham sat next me in the Speaker's Gallery while the debate on the Treason-Felony Bill for Ireland was going on. He is not much given to politics, and I

was disposed to wonder at the absorbed attention he gave to the speeches, till the fierce look in his eyes when the advocates for extreme measures were on their feet made me understand that the writers of insurrectionary poems, whom the supporters of the bill were proposing to treat like felons, were to him all represented by the person of D'Arcy O'Donnell; that it was the man who had stolen away Ellen Daly's heart whom he hoped that night's work would render liable to transportation for life in punishment for chance words."

"And you, John—you were not reading your own feelings in his?"

"Well, no. I think I may say certainly not. I have no doubt I am just as jealous and revengeful as he is, but it would be a poor result of all one's struggles if at my age one could not see anything beyond the gratification of one's own feelings in a question of national interest, or if one had not got further than the savage instinct of wanting to secure a woman's affections by knocking one's rivals right and left out of the way."

"But you think Captain Pelham capable of cherishing such feelings while he is professing an attachment to poor little Lesbia?"

"Not of cherishing them, but of carrying them alive in his heart without knowing they are there. Lesbia has

been thrown in his way, and he is allowing himself to be influenced, as you would have her be, by other people's expectations of him; that is why I wish to warn her."

"I will not say another word against it; but don't speak this evening. Let her have a good night's rest after her fatiguing day. That is her step in the passage. Let us be talking of last night's debate when she comes in. So you were in the House, were you, John, when Mr. Smith O'Brien openly advocated insurrection in Ireland?"

"Yes, and I hear yet the yells and hootings that greeted his wild words. If his were a possible enterprise—if by some strange chance it were to succeed, and the revolution in Ireland were to become an established fact inaugurating a new order of things—I can imagine some future historian of revolutions taking pleasure in describing the moment when he stood up, with hardly a sympathiser near him, to face the indignation and ridicule of the entire House, while he quietly and slowly expressed his belief in the right of Irishmen to fight for liberty, to live on their own soil, and to possess themselves of arms at a moment when their rulers told them they were prepared to crush expression of opinion, not by argument, but by force."

"I do believe you were a sympathising listener."

"No, I am not a believer in revolutions, and this will not be one. The present Government is strong enough

and wise enough not to let it grow to heroic dimensions, and Smith O'Brien will lose his chance of being a hero, except to the very few people who can reverence high purposes when possibilities of accomplishment are wanting."

"But has the bill passed that will make the foolish rhapsodies of foolish young men like Connor Daly and D'Arcy O'Donnell matter for transportation for life?"

"If fools fling fire about, and we find sensible people's houses in danger of catching, their amusement must be stopped."

"Hush; don't say anything to awaken Lesbia's interest in the fire-flingers."

There was a pause in the talk when Lesbia, who had entered the room a few minutes before, approached the window recess, and John made it awkward by observing in rather a forced tone that he and Bride were discussing Mr. O'Brien's speech.

"Oh, they have come back to London from Paris, then," Lesbia exclaimed, and coloured scarlet at the end of her speech. Bride was preparing to ask whom she meant by *they*, when John broke up the conference. "I am going down stairs to write letters," he said. "You had better read the debate aloud to Lesbia, it will interest you both."

"Yes, dear Bride, do begin at once," Lesbia acquiesced

eagerly. "Let us sit here in the window recess, and I shall be listening to your reading even if I do seem to be looking out of the window."

Bride grew absorbed in the debate as she read; but Lesbia heard very little, and understood less. Bride might have spared her precautions to save her little sister from hearing news at the end of the day, for Lesbia was not only well aware of Captain Pelham's intentions, but she had already, in the solitude of her own room, without consulting anyone, taken measures to prevent his carrying them into execution. She had written him a letter, and was now busy asking herself what John and Bride would think of such a monstrous proceeding as refusing a man before he had asked her. It had all come of some too affectionate demonstrations from Lady Pelham while she and Lesbia had been pacing the avenue together before Ham House, and from a significant word that Marmaduke had let fall when he wished her good night. When she was shut up alone in her own room a full consciousness of the seriousness of the crisis she had brought upon herself seized her, and she was overwhelmed with shame and confusion. She had been anticipating this result of her own conduct, but now that it was close at hand it assumed a very different aspect from that it had worn far off. She did not know now whether she reproached herself most

bitterly for her conduct to the Pelham family in encouraging them to waste hopes and build projects on her which she had all along meant to disappoint, or whether she was most self-humiliated for having drawn on her own head the slight of an insincere wooing. "She might not be worthy of so much love as Ellen Daly, on whom it seemed so much was bestowed," she said to herself; "but surely she was worth something more than to be married just for her money; no one caring for herself, or troubling themselves in the least to consider whether she should be happy or unhappy in the bonds that must be burdensome if love had had nothing to do with the binding of them. Surely there must be something better in store for her than that. Bride seemed to think Captain Pelham's sort of love good enough for her; but then Bride was blind, and did not know anything about love. But it was unjust to reflect on other people. She knew she had brought the insincere courtship on herself; and now that her eyes were open to the shame of it there was only one thing to be done—to draw back as far as possible now, and spare herself and her pretended lover the last step in the farce that would be mortification to them both.

She sprang from her seat with the resolute expression on her face that came there sometimes, and caused people to remark that after all there was a likeness between the

sisters, and seating herself at her writing table she wrote rapidly.

"Please don't come to see me to-morrow as you said you would. You will think it very strange of me to say before you have spoken that, whatever you were going to ask me would be of no use; but I want us to remain good friends, and I think we can be so better if you don't come to me to-morrow. Try to get your mother and sisters to forgive me for not seeing them again before we leave London. I am going to ask John to take me back to Castle Daly next week. The sight of the hawthorn in flower in the Petersham fields to-day has inspired me with a longing for the country and a determination not to waste any more spring days in town. When I come back next winter we will talk about Connemara just as we used to do, and I shall still be your little friend whom you taught to ride.—LESBIA MAYNARD."

She folded and directed her note without reading it over, and then ran down stairs and confided it to James Morris, the Dalys' former servant, whom she had adopted into great favour and brought with her to England, and on whose despatch and tact in any matter that specially concerned herself she could always rely.

While Bride read aloud she watched him across the square, and then awaited the result with misgivings gra-

dually strengthening. Had she taken a very monstrous, out-of-the-way step? Would Bride consider that it disgraced her for ever? What would she have thought of it herself in the old days when she used to sit at her attic window looking over Aunt Joseph's little oyster-paved back garden, when the possibility of a baronet's son making her an offer would have seemed so very remote and so glorious? Was that James Morris crossing the square again? How could Bride expect her to be interested in all that confused tiresome stuff about liberty of the press, and laws of libel and treason-felony, when such very much more important questions were pending?

"How clear and pointed," Bride exclaimed; "this speech of Sir Robert Peel's would be deeply interesting even if we had no friends whom the proposed law is likely to affect. Do you think you have followed his argument, Lesbia? or would you like to go through it again?"

Lesbia turned round in dread of an explanation which Bride would expect her at least to try to understand, and was relieved by the sound of a ring at the servants' bell.

"Yes, dear; I think it is quite clear all that about treason and felony being exactly the same thing in Ireland. I quite understand, but James Morris has just come in with a note for me, and I think if you don't object I will go and see what it is and be back in a few minutes."

Bride finished the debate to herself, and then as the light failed rang for tea and candles, and took up a book. "Do you know where Miss Lesbia is?" she asked of the servant who answered the bell. "Will you tell her I am waiting tea for her?"

"Miss Maynard is in the study with Mr. Thornley; she went there half an hour ago with a note that came for her, and said she did not wish to be disturbed," was the answer.

"Then you had better carry the tea down again," Bride said quietly, but she did not resume her book when the door closed. She sat with her hands clasped on its open pages and her head bowed down, feeling much as if a wave of bitter water had flowed over her. Why, if confidence was to be given—if an important decision affecting the child's life was to be discussed—must she be left out? She had been tenderer over Lesbia than ever John was, why did the little sister find him so much easier to talk to than herself? Was any fault in herself the cause, or was it that secret bond of a common liking, drawing them together and leaving her out, which was always showing itself to the peril of her peace? Bride had time to put the temptation to self-pity and bitterness quite away, and school herself to receive cordially whatever intelligence might be given before any interruption broke upon her reverie, for it was quite late in the evening when John and

Lesbia entered the drawing-room together. Lesbia's eyelids were swollen with tears, but her lips were tremulous with little joyful smiles that broke out every minute as she hung over Bride wishing her good night and overwhelming her with playful caresses, that coming just then the elder sister, in spite of all her good resolutions, found a little trying. When she had left the room John took to pacing up and down before the windows, a sure sign that something was weighing on his mind. "Come and walk with me, Bride," he said at last, "I have something to tell you."

"I had rather hear it sitting, thank you," Bride said, a little drily. He came and leaned over her chair.

"But why? You used to say we never settled any question satisfactorily unless we discussed it quarter-deck fashion—arm-in-arm."

"That was when questions were discussed between us. When I have only to hear what is already decided I had rather sit."

"Bride, you have a right to complain. I must begin by asking you to forgive me. Lesbia and I have settled a matter to-night without even recollecting that your wishes might point a different way from ours. We are selfish wretches, and it is very hard on you; forgive us."

"No, no! forgive my moment's ill-temper. You were

quite right to conclude without asking that I shall be content with whatever pleases you and Lesbia. Tell me the decision you arrived at. I promise not to raise objections if I can possibly help it."

"I have agreed (at Lesbia's earnest request) to give up this house, and go back to Connemara as soon as you and she can be ready for the move."

"You forget who is coming to-morrow, and on what errand. This sudden wish to leave London looks like pique. To-morrow's explanation with Captain Pelham will bring a change of plans, you will see."

"On the contrary, it is Marmaduke Pelham's proposal that drives Lesbia from London. I could not make out all the details of her story, she was at times so very tearful; but the poor dear little thing blames herself bitterly for having misled the Pelhams. It seems that Marmaduke did make his intention plain to-day; and to save him the pain of a formal refusal, she bravely sent him a note this evening to forbid the call to-morrow. She brought me his answer. She wishes you to see it also; here it is."

Bride took a sheet of note paper on which a few lines had been hastily scrawled and read:—

"A thousand thanks for yours. I was a fool and an ass for letting my sisters talk me into misunderstanding you

for a moment. Forgive my presumption, and believe always in my high esteem and regard.—M. P."

"A better note than I should have expected him to write under the circumstances. Of course this ends every expectation in that quarter, and I must give up my dream of seeing Lesbia installed at Abbots Thornley. Poor Lady Pelham, she and I shall always agree in thinking that it would have been a good thing; but, John, I cannot see the connection between this refusal and your determination to set off in hot haste to Ireland."

"Don't you? In Lesbia's opinion and mine it is the only way out of our difficulty."

"But, my dear John, there is no difficulty. Why should we all run away from London because Lesbia has had an offer? It will be the most ridiculous proceeding in the world, and will provoke everybody to talk about us."

"Will it? Well, I am sorry you think so but I have promised Lesbia, and I really can't take back my word."

"You are a judicious guardian, truly. I don't wish to be ill-natured, John, but I must say just this. You had better consider well, for whatever comes of this hasty movement, the responsibility will be yours."

"As far as one ever is responsible for remote results, I am ready to take it. This evening's resolution may seem sudden to you, but I have long been tending towards it, and

so I find has Lesbia. There would be consequences from our staying away as well as from our going, and I believe I am right in following the feeling that prompts me to dread those most of all."

CHAPTER V.

"Thrice happy she that is so well assur'd
Unto herself, and settled so in heart,
That neither will for better be allur'd
Ne fears to worse with any chance to start,
But like a steady ship doth strongly part
The raging waves and keeps her course aright;
Ne ought for tempest doth from it depart,
Ne ought for fairer weather's false delight."

SPENSER.

"YES, bring them to me to the bedside, and let me hold them in my hand. I did not think I should live to see either again, tokens of how old the summer has grown, which I hardly thought to see begin. I expected to go so long before this that each pretty thing the season brings seems a special indulgence to me that I must make much of."

It was a warm July day, towards the end of the month, and Ellen had just entered Anne O'Flaherty's sick-room, carrying in her hand a purple and orange potato flower and a full ear of barley in its first stage of changing from green

to pale yellow. She came to her cousin's bedside, and put the stalks between the wasted fingers that lay almost powerless upon the counterpane, and stooped to kiss the face where all the remaining life seemed to be concentrated, looking eagerly and lovingly still out of her hollow, glittering eyes.

"I gathered the barley ear from that field of Farmer Joice's on the hillside you persuaded him to break up for tillage two years ago, and the potato flower is from Widow O'Reilly's garden in the hollow. Her plot looks well; there is no sign of the blight there yet, and the corn is whitening already."

The words were spoken plainly and meaningly, and an anxious look stole into Anne's eyes. Great care had been taken to keep disturbing tidings from the sick-room, where now for many weeks she had been lying patiently waiting for the end; but her nurses had not been able to shut out a certain uneasy expectation of what might be expected to follow the gathering of the harvest from penetrating even to her. By many people in Ireland that year the first golden grain was looked for as a signal of preparation for a reaping that would not end in the piling of peaceful corn sheaves, and in gathering food for the year; and in spite of all precautions to hide it from her, Anne knew this well.

"Does Farmer Joice think we shall have an early harvest?" she asked again.

"We can hardly tell yet," Ellen said soothingly. "And meanwhile here is a bright warm day, and you are easier; and there was a letter from Connor last night, speaking of coming home soon, and Widow O'Reilly has dug up a dish of potatoes from a bed she sowed with the new seed you got from America, and they look so well she is crying for joy over them."

Anne's face brightened. "You do well to keep me looking at the little daily events close at hand. What have I to do with anything further off? Each day that finds and leaves me here is an unexpected gift."

"You can feel it so?" Ellen asked wistfully. "In spite of all the pain and weariness, you are not in a hurry to have done with us and our troubles?"

"I don't think I ever shall have done with them," Anne said, smiling. "I don't suppose it will make so much difference to me as to you, when the veil between me and the unseen world is quite withdrawn. I have come so near I can almost feel and see the air and light from the other side streaming through, and whatever glorious new conditions the being there may bring, I can't believe that less love or care for those I leave behind will be any part of the result."

"But we shall cease to have proofs of the love and care."

"And so I am quite content to be left on the threshold during these long waiting weeks, 'waiting for the harvest'; it may bring peace and plenty in spite of all our fears, and by the time I have passed out of sight and hearing, you may not want my sick-bed to sit beside."

"I shall always want it."

"Poor child! It's you that I'm sorry for. Rest is coming to me, and the burden of all will fall on your shoulders. You understand what I mean, don't you?"

"Not quite."

"That you will have to take my place here, altogether"—

"Oh! Anne; but Connor."

"Connor knows; he has chosen his part. I could not trust the lives and interests of my people to him in his present frame of mind. Whatever the next two or three months may bring—wherever he may be when they are over—I am afraid he will have unfitted himself for ever doing any useful work in Ireland again."

"Anne, I believe I am at heart almost as great a rebel as Connor. I can't bear that he should be disinherited for doing what, if I had been his brother instead of his sister, I should probably have taken part in."

"It is a trust, not a possession, I leave with you, dear,

and I always meant to take the one of you most fitted for it. You must let me rejoice that I can put it confidently into your hands—that you have not cut yourself off from following me. There was a sorrowful time last spring when I feared you would so cut yourself off, and leave me no free person of my own blood to whom I could give up my work."

"You mean the time when Cousin D'Arcy stayed with us. I did not believe you knew what was passing among us, or that if I had consented to what he wished it would have made you unhappy. Why did not you warn me?"

"I did not want to influence you unduly. I remembered that I had been young myself, and how in those days tones of voice like his and looks like his affected me. Now that it is all over I should like to know why you sent him away, and how you escaped his influence at the time. I thought it was all over with you, and that my poor Good People's Hollow people had lost you quite, for I could not have given them the wife of a rebel leader for their mistress."

"I should like to tell you all since you have divined so much; and perhaps you will be able to help me to understand myself better than I do now. You know that mamma and Pelham took to D'Arcy at once when he came to stay with us at Eagle's Edge after his visit to you. They felt as I did—that it was almost like having

papa again in the house. But though he fascinated us all, it was only to me that he opened out on the subject he really came for. At first his enthusiasm took as great a hold on me as it has done on Connor; and when he talked about his hopes and plans I was dazzled, and could not help believing in them and giving him the fullest sympathy. But later, when he began to say words to me about the new strength my sympathy gave, and what I might be to him and the cause if I could love him, I was startled and distressed. I thought I ought to feel honoured and happy, and I hated myself sometimes for shrinking back, calling myself half-hearted, and incapable of giving the devotion to a cause or a person that more unselfish women were giving. I had almost worked myself up to believe that my whole heart was with the cause and with him when that troubled time came of Pelham's quarrel with Darby O'Roone and the duel. I did not blame either Pelham or D'Arcy for the part they took, but I found that my thoughts flew off at once to another friend of Pelham's, whose influence, if he had been near, would have been very differently exercised. D'Arcy had to leave Connemara early in the next day, and I had promised to give him an answer before he left. We spent the last day here. You were very unwell, and I passed the greater part of that night by your bedside. Once, in opening a

drawer to find something you wanted, I caught sight of a letter from Bride Thornley, which some months before you had taken from me lest I should make myself unhappy by reading it again. I was seized with a great desire to read it, and when you were asleep I took it to the hearth-rug, and spelt it out by firelight just as I had done on the evening I received it. I don't know what it did to me, but as I read the words, every one of which I remembered perfectly, I felt as if scales fell from my eyes, and I understood myself and what I really cared for at last. I discovered that a very different image from D'Arcy's had come into my heart and become impressed on all my thoughts; that it was quite another sort of approval than his I really coveted. When I was a child, I never could be content unless mamma was satisfied with me. Even when I had your good word and papa's, hers seemed to be the only praise worth struggling for because it was so deliberately and calmly given."

"Ah! I see it is the strong English sense and high standard of duty you turn to and trust beyond the warm Irish impulse, after all."

"I have not vexed you, Anne?"

"No, darling, no, for it is that I've come round to prefer myself and trust in to help you to carry out all the plans I have failed to perfect, and to correct all my mistakes here."

"I shall have the help in one way, but, Anne, you must not expect more than can really be. Last summer, on the bridge out there, I made my decision for life, and I know quite well that he will never ask me to alter it. I spoke too angrily and vehemently for anything further ever to be said."

"Well, dear, it may be so, I agree with you, that John Thornley is not a man to get over a repulse easily, but I suppose you often meet now that he and his sisters have come back to live at Castle Daly?"

"Not often. Miss Thornley, who used to come to Eagle's Edge sometimes, left the Castle three weeks ago to stay with some friend in England, and the other two have not time, or perhaps inclination, to pay visits to us. We meet at the schools and the public kitchens, and sometimes in the cabins, and Lesbia makes a great fuss over me; but indeed, Anne, whatever coldness there is, is not my fault. I wonder at myself sometimes for being able to talk and consult with Mr. Thornley as freely as if last summer had never been, and he is, with me, just like anybody else, except that I know there is nothing that I can suggest or ask that will not be contrived and brought about with him there. I think Pelham is the one that keeps up the distance between us. He can't forget that Darby O'Roone goes about accusing him everywhere of having forced a

duel upon him for the express purpose of currying favour with the heiress; and the accusation is so galling to Pelham that he can't do enough to show he does not expect any gratitude for his championship. He sometimes makes himself so wooden and dignified when Lesbia is talking to him, and looking up with just the coaxing expression in her eyes we used to admire at Whitecliffe, that I should be dreadfully sorry for her if I did not see that she and her brother are so happy together, that I hardly think she can care much for anything else."

"And the elder sister has left Castle Daly; that accounts for my not having seen her for so long."

"You were very ill the week before she left, and Dr. Lynch would not hear of her coming to say good-bye."

"It would have been the last good-bye. I must not expect many more—perhaps not another such day of ease as this; it is a breathing time given me to say last words, and make up last accounts. I wish I could bring all my friends round to shake hands and say good-bye to-day."

"I wish Connor were here."

"Poor fellow! he has not seen me for so long my wasted face would be a shock to him; but if the Thornleys call I should like them to be brought in here. I might not be able to say much, but I should look into their faces once again and shake hands."

Anne's strength had ebbed again, and was so small, when in the hot afternoon horses' hoofs were heard crossing the bridge that Ellen came to the bedside to persuade her against receiving visitors that day, but Anne was resolute. "Just for a moment," she pleaded, "I may not have another chance; bring little Lesbia in, too. I want to have a vision of both their faces to carry away with me. I should like to strengthen the links between myself and them by just a word or two more."

Ellen ran down stairs to bring the guests to Anne's room, and met John and Lesbia mounting the steps of the house.

"Is this change they speak of better or worse?" John asked, anxiously.

It was the first time he and Ellen had met at the Hollow since last summer; but both were too full of thoughts of Anne for embarrassing recollections.

"It is freedom from pain for the present, possibly for a week or so, Dr. Lynch thinks," Ellen answered, "and she has set her heart on making use of the time to see her friends. Don't be afraid, Babette, her face is very pale and thin, but there is no expression of pain on it now, and she talks and smiles to-day quite like her old self."

So John thought when he entered the room and found Anne half-sitting up in bed, with both hands outstretched

towards him, and the eager light of welcome on her face with which she was wont to receive favoured guests.

"I am glad it is once more," she said, "one more 'kindly welcome' to Good People's Hollow from me to you. Set it against other things in your thoughts of the place; and now take a seat by me, for I have something particular to say to you."

If John hoped from the significance with which the kindly welcome had been spoken that what was coming would have reference to his own concerns he was mistaken. Ellen and Lesbia withdrew to the window, out of hearing of Anne's low tones; but the confidences slowly breathed out referred only to her wishes about her funeral. There must be a wake, of course, and people would flock from all parts of the neighbourhood; and Anne feared, if it should occur about harvest-time, while this uneasy expectation of disturbance lasted, that the assembling of so many people together might be made a pretext for violence by one side or the other. "I trust to you and to Pelham to watch," she said; "if any of my people were to get into trouble while I was lying here dead, I think it would disturb me so that I must get up out of my coffin and come back. If they will not listen to anyone else, you must bring Ellen to speak to them, and tell them to go home peaceably for the love of God and me. They will

understand and obey her. You are thinking that after a life-time of working among them I ought to have brought them to a better state than to need such appeals, and I don't say it is not so; but I have governed them to the best of my knowledge, and at least their hearts are warm towards each other, and reverent towards God; and there are places, perhaps, where so much as that can't be said of the lowest people."

Murdock Malachy had taken Mr. Thornley's and Lesbia's horses round to the stables, and while they were being brought back Ellen and John and Lesbia walked in the garden at the back of the house, avoiding the bridge by tacit consent. John could speak of no one but Anne. Her few last words had touched him deeply. "It is very uncommon," he said, "to meet with a woman in whom care for the general good is so strong, that to the last it overpowers all personal feeling, and keeps the mind on the alert, foreseeing for others to the very verge of life. She is a born queen."

"Yes," Ellen said, "suffering as she is, she would like to stay to help us through the dark times that are coming after the harvest. She said just now she was willing to wait here till the storm burst, and I think I feel more grateful to her for that, than for all the help she has given me in her life. It has been a habit with me ever

since I can remember to fly to Anne whenever there was trouble hanging over Connor. To fear for him, with her away, would be more than I could bear."

"Could not you persuade him, by an appeal to his affection for her and you, to keep out of trouble in this crisis, and spare a pang to her last days? I fear he has done much to commit himself; still, if he would go abroad, or visit your uncle Pelham in England till the next month is over, all might be well. I had letters this morning which determined me to speak of this to-day. He would listen to you, perhaps, and to her speaking from her death-bed, when no other remonstrance would take effect."

Ellen's face flushed as she answered quickly, "Could you, if you were in Connor's place, listen to any appeal, from a dying bed even, that called on you to desert your friends in the moment of danger; to go back from all your professions because the time had come when it cost you something to act on them? Have I a right—has even Anne a right—to ask him to be a coward and a traitor? I had rather break my heart over him in prison, or in his grave."

"I look on Connor rather as a victim than as a responsible partizan," John answered quietly. "He has been led, through the vehemence of his friendships, to take part in measures he has not sufficient experience to judge

sanely. I want to save him from suffering the full, dire consequences of his friends' mistakes. Since it is now plain to all competent judges that the talked-of rising will simply be an act of madness in all who take part in it, I can't imagine why you should shrink from persuading him not to fulfil such Herod's vows."

"The madness is not so plain to him or to me. If I thought I could persuade Connor to keep out of danger when the rest of them are in it I might perhaps be tempted to try. It would save us—ah, you don't know what agony, to know that he was safe, hiding under Uncle Pelham's wing while things were happening in Ireland; but I don't know that we should gain much in reality. When it was all over, when his friends had perhaps triumphed, or more likely been crushed, it would not be Connor Daly who would come back to us from the safe hiding-place; we should never see anything more of *him* with the warm heart and high spirit: for all there would be left of him, I think he might as well have made his grave with his friends, or been sent among felons across the sea, as Mr. Mitchell is going now."

John observed the glow that came into Ellen's fair cheek as she spoke, and the light in her eyes, and put down the strong emotion she evinced to a wrong cause. "Yes," he said to himself, "it is plain enough where her

heart is; nothing but love could so twist her vision as to make her see those men in a heroic light, and almost glory in the thought of her brother falling a sacrifice to his fidelity to them. Poor child! there is a terrible awakening before her, a long dreary heart-ache. How can I help her? How shall I be able to stand by and see her suffer with all that power of suffering she has, for another man's sake?"

"One moment more," he said aloud to Ellen; for just then Murdock's voice, calling a gossoon to run round to the back of the house and tell the lady and gentleman that their horses were dead bate wid the fatigue of standing still waiting so long—"One moment! If you can't interfere, and think Connor must be left to his fate now, at least let us do what we can to save Pelham from being implicated, and to keep the knowledge of his danger from your mother as long as possible. Have you any reason to expect a visit from Connor at this time?"

"Yes; he said in his last letter that we might see him soon."

"That is what I feared, and what you must do all you can to prevent. I have reason to know that measures are being taken to oblige the disaffected club-leaders to declare themselves sooner than they intended. They will not be allowed to wait till after the harvest. In another day or

two they will either be arrested or have fled, or they will be defending themselves in arms. Already they are aware of this, and the chief members of the Dublin clubs are dispersing about the country to sound the disposition of the people and prepare for a rising. Don't let Connor come here. In a few hours this district will be proclaimed, and power placed in the hands of magistrates—of whom, remember, O'Roone is one—to arrest suspected rebels. Connor will be watched from the moment he enters the neighbourhood. Keep him in Dublin, where he may escape notice among others more important. There is, I think, a good hope that the crisis may pass over with the arrest and punishment of a few conspicuous offenders, and that there will be no popular rising at all."

"You think, after all that has been said and written, the people will not fight—that they will give up their leaders? Oh! no; I cannot believe it."

The mingled incredulity and disappointment in the tone provoked a smile from John Thornley.

"You are a true Irishwoman," he said; "you can't disabuse yourself of the idea that some good is to be got by fighting, whatever the odds may be. Yet I think your reason will tell you that the peaceful solution is the best chance of escape from ruin your friends have."

"For Connor, yes; and indeed I don't want the fighting to come. I only can't believe that so much——"

"Bluster!"

"No, no; don't say that—so much strong feeling and hope as have possessed some will end in what would be to them such utter despair. But I will do all I can to keep Connor in Dublin for a week longer. Would that do?"

"I quite believe it would—Connor, and if possible your cousin, Mr. O'Donnell."

"D'Arcy! But how would that be possible? He *is* one of the leaders," Ellen answered, a little proudly. "If anyone is to suffer for what has been written and attempted this year, I don't believe he would choose to be left out."

"It would be a pity," John answered gravely, "for a man of his powers to throw away all the chances of life at twenty-three on such a poor, ill-judged, ill-planned attempt as this will prove to be. I speak as a fellow literary man. Let him reserve himself for work he is fitted for. There are plenty of fools and ruffians to fling themselves on bayonets in a mad impulse of savage pugnacity; he is made for something better than that."

"For words instead of deeds? For inciting the ruffians to fling away their lives, and stealing off while they do it? Do you mean to call that better?"

"What I mean to say is, that I think, if I were he, with the prospect of happiness that appears to be before him, I should not throw away my chances on such a mad scheme as this; but Murdock is calling again—we must go."

"I will write to Connor to-night," Ellen said, holding out her hand. "Thank you for warning us. D'Arcy, too, will be grateful to you for your care for his fate, though he will not take a word of your advice. He has often heard of you from us."

A cloud passed over John's face, and he withdrew his hand rather coldly from the cordial clasp Ellen would have given. The vision he conjured up of Ellen and D'Arcy discussing his character together was not pleasant, and he half regretted the generous impulse that led him to say words, at some cost of pain to himself, that seemed likely to have so little result.

CHAPTER VI.

"King Robert came too late;
Long, long may Erin mourn,
Famine's rage and dreadful fate
Forbade her Bannockburn."

LAMENT FOR EDWARD BRUCE.

ELLEN mounted the stairs to Anne's room with a much less tranquil mind than she had carried in coming down. The prospect of danger to Connor five or six weeks hence was a different thing from the thought of his being in peril now, perhaps at this hour; and yet, so completely was she imbued with his spirit, that she could not help a vague feeling of exhilaration stealing in among her fears. She had heard the question asked so often in eloquent speech or verse, "Has the time come?" that the thought "It has come, then, at last," sent a thrill through her nerves. She hardly asked herself "The time for what?" The glowing words and burning verse had raised a mist before her, through which she could only see that something was to be nobly dared for Ireland, and the consequences lay

beyond, hidden by the halo that appeared to surround the effort. Anne was asleep when she re-entered the room, so she took her writing-case to a table in the window, to begin her letter. The writing it took a long time, for she had to frame her sentences cautiously, so as to appeal to considerations most likely to weigh with Connor, and yet not startle him by seeming to ask too much. She thought it better to avoid any allusion to Mr. Thornley, as Connor would think of him only as a cunning enemy to the cause, and might even in his vanity consider his cautions a stratagem to deprive the movement of his valuable presence and aid at its most critical moment. As she wrote, fear and sickening anxiety for Connor predominated, and put out the will-o'-the-wisp light of excitement, and she was often obliged to lay aside her pen and calm herself by looking over the quiet valley. How many mothers and sisters and friends might there not be throughout Ireland employed just then like herself, scheming with sick hearts to hold back their dearest from rushing on destruction; or, more painfully yet, battling within themselves between the martyr spirit that urged them on to let go, and the cry of the heart that bade them hold back. Oh, if the right and the wrong were only quite clear to her mind, how much easier action would be! If she could feel sure that this effort about to be made for restoring nationality to

Ireland was not only hopeless, but wrong. That it was hopeless was not, she thought, enough to urge against it; so many apparently hopeless causes had been gained in the end. Had not Gideon gone out to victory with three hundred chosen men, and Tell with three; and had not Bruce landed with his friend, the two of them on the shore at Arran over there, to save Scotland from wearing that Nessus garment of shame, the consciousness of being a conquered country, which clung to Ireland and eat into her vitals yet? It was not reason enough to urge for holding back that the cause was hopeless. But, might it not be true that the days were past when such struggles had the help of Heaven; that the time for smiting with the sword had gone by, and bloodless moral victories were those alone on which Heaven smiles now? And then on Ellen's memory there rose a vision of a scene she had witnessed in her childhood, when her father had taken her to Cliefden to hear Daniel O'Connell harangue a countless multitude gathered on the green hill-sides, and along the shores of the blue fiord that there indents the coast, on his favourite scheme of raising Ireland to the rank of an independent nation again, through the majestic force of its people's united will, peacefully expressed. She saw again the genial, beaming, grand face of the speaker raised above the throng, the thousand faces turned one way, all with an

intent, sympathetic look upon them; she heard the deep, acquiescing shout that greeted every pause in his speech. Was it all wasted feeling, wasted eloquence? Were the thousands of hearts that had all but attained the fever-heat of enthusiasm that moulds an inspired nation to sink back into units again, unable to act on the impulses that moved them most deeply? *That* seemed to Ellen, just then, the saddest tragedy of all—a worse death than any other dying. To weave ropes of sand eternally that bind nothing; to struggle and rage unceasingly and bring forth nothing! Were not Connor and his friends perhaps right to try to create some spark of life, if it were only the galvanic spark that moves a corpse? Or was it better to bow meekly before the inevitable, trusting to the guiding hand of God, and to confidence inspired by faith in Him, that no unselfish effort shall fail utterly, but that even in dying it shall find a new body prepared for it, a fruit unlooked for, something different from and beyond what the flower promised? In the far future Ireland's past struggles and woes, and those of other nations as ill-fated, might have some such unforeseen solution—in the grand gathering up times, when not nationality, but something larger and higher, shall be the bond uniting the peoples of the earth together—it may be that the nations and races who have suffered most and drained the cup of humiliation

to the dregs will be found (having learned most from suffering) capable of the grandest work for the whole, and will be preferred to the highest places, and crowned with crowns of dominion. Then would the names of those who from afar had foreseen the glory, but never entered into it, who had refused to give up hope, who had worshipped at the cradle of worth, be remembered again, and honoured and worn in all the glad hearts.

It was late when the letter was finished, and Ellen resolved not to trust it in the hands of Malachy, who usually took the letters from Good People's Hollow to meet the post-car that passed in the early morning on the road between Westport and Ballyowen.

She believed him quite capable, in the case of a letter from Connor, of exercising a right of investigation, and speeding or retarding its despatch, according to his own approval of the contents. She had meant to return to Eagle's Edge early on the next day, and as she could reach the point where Murdock usually intercepted the car by making a circuit of a few miles on her way home she resolved to be her own letter-carrier, and took leave of Anne when she wished her good night.

During the summer of Miss O'Flaherty's illness, Ellen had been in the habit of taking the long walk between, Eagle's Edge and the Hollow at almost all hours of the day

from early morning till late evening; she knew the shortest cuts across the mountains, and had her favourite resting-places under sheltering rocks by the side of lonely mountain tarns; or in ferny nooks of the valleys fragrant with woodbine, when the sunshine lay hot on the hill-sides, and the shaded hollows were the most inviting. The divergence from her usual route to meet the car would prolong her walk by an hour or so, and she determined to set out very early before any of the household were up. It was the dim grey hour before sunrise when she stole softly down the staircase with her letter and the key of the front door in her hand, and she felt some surprise at perceiving she was not the earliest riser. There were sounds of some one stirring down stairs, and when she had let herself out of the house she came upon Murdock Malachy limping round the corner from the back premises. He started at sight of her, and seemed disposed to slink away without his customary "Top of the morning to ye, Miss Eileen," but thinking better of it, he ran after her and caught her up as she was crossing the bridge.

"It's early ye're setting out for yer walk this morning, Miss Eileen dear," he said, looking into her face wistfully; "the paths up the mountains are bad for such feet as yours, wid the dew thick on them. Ye'd a dale better go back to the house and wait an hour till the sun's up. The

girls are setting to work to make hot bread for breakfast this morning, and fit to break their hearts they'll be if there's no one to ate it, such a sin as it is to waste the good food this year."

"But I must go home, Murdock. I intend to be at Eagle's Edge long before breakfast-time to superintend the bread-making for my mother's breakfast. You'll easily find somebody to eat my share of the Indian meal-cakes you have learned to make so well at the Hollow."

"The path across Lac-y-Core is the road ye're taking this morning, Miss Eileen, then, if you must go; you'll find it the driest and most convanient by a long way."

"Thank you, Murdock. I've come so often to the Hollow on foot lately that there's little chance of my losing my way, whichever path across the mountains I take."

He did not seem satisfied, she thought, and when she had crossed the valley and was half-way up the steep road that led out of Anne's domain, she looked back and saw him still leaning with his elbows on the bridge-rail looking after her. The mist lay thick in the Hollow, but a little group of cabins on the hill-side had caught the first rays of the rising sun, and stood out distinct against the sky, and Ellen saw through the low doors, one, two, three, four figures of men creeping out. She stood still to watch

them. They did not disperse into their little patches of garden ground on the slope of the hill or to the pastures where the cows were feeding. They turned to the mountains and began to climb, taking the direction she herself was following, and when she had reached the highest point of the path, and began to descend towards the main oad, looking down she saw another frieze-coated figure striding along through the mist before her. Early as it was there was an unusual stir, as if others besides herself had found the summer night too long, and were impelled to be beforehand in meeting what the day was bringing. Ellen was not afraid to meet any of these people. No one would hurt her on these lonely mountain sides, but the sense of expectation to which their alertness testified, excited her and made her press eagerly on her way, longing to have despatched her letter and to be at home. She did not pause to rest till she was close upon the hamlet where the post-car stopped to change horses, and there she discovered that she was considerably more than an hour too early, and must find a convenient place to wait in till the car appeared. The road along which she was walking skirted the side of a hill, at whose foot the little hamlet lay, and, looking upwards, Ellen saw a peat pile conveniently placed for shelter, with one or two fallen sods at its base, arranged so as to make a comfortable arm-

chair to rest in. She took off her bonnet and drew her cloak over her head, when she had established herself in this nook, for the morning air was chilly still. The mountain tops were beginning to grow red in the sunlight, but the mist lay in long curling wreaths along their sides and brooded over the valley. From where Ellen sat it was like looking down into a sea of moving quicksilver, which, swaying and parting now and again, showed glimpses of what lay beneath—the church spire, with its vane catching the sunbeam, the straggling street of cabins, many of them deserted and roofless now, the small way-side inn where the car stopped. The churchyard crowded with graves and sloping up the hill-side to the edge of the road, was the object nearest Ellen and the one that looked most real. She amused herself by making out the boundary lines of its inclosure, and observing how, minute by minute, as the sun rose higher and the mist rolled back, the shapes of the crosses and head-stones by the graves grew clearer. Was it a funeral that was going on there below at this time of day? It was hardly possible, and yet it was clear that some ceremony was being enacted in that least-frequented corner by the north wall just below her feet. There was a group of figures moving, and some of them appeared to be stooping over an open grave. Were they mourners, or what had drawn that little band of

frieze-coated men together in the misty morning twilight? Ellen thrust herself further under the shelter of the peat wall, and her heart almost ceased beating with horror as her eyes, grown accustomed to the scene, made out more and more clearly what was going on below. Dreadful stories she had heard of murders of supposed spies by their comrades in secret lodges, and of their subsequent interment, recurred to her mind, and made her long to hide her eyes, even while anxiety compelled her to look. They were certainly digging a grave, those two men only a yard or two below her, hastily and yet cautiously. The surface had been carefully pared away and laid in sods ready to be restored to its place, and as the trench momentarily grew wider and deeper, the bystanders began to crowd round the edge, and push eager faces forward over each other's shoulders to look in.

That was Murdock Malachy's face thrust between the arms of the diggers. What a curious expression there was on it, and on those of the other men round—flushed with joyful expectation, and yet fierce, with staring eyes that seemed longing for some dearly-loved sight long withheld! It would be terrible to think that such smiles could come on faces that had recently seen blood shed. At last there was a dull ring, as if the spade had struck some harder substance than clay. A murmur rose among the by-

standers, low but intense—"Glory be to God, they're there, boys! A moment longer and we'll have them betwixt our fingers again. Pass the rope down, and hurry, in the name of God." The two men who had been digging now jumped into the pit. A few more strokes and they were heaving something up which eager hands from above clutched. Ellen saw it distinctly; it was a coffin, rude and roughly put together, like many that had been used in the two black years of constant funerals they had passed through, but unmistakably a coffin; and when it had been placed on the ground, and a dozen hands at least were tugging at its sides and top to tear it asunder, a feeling of deadly sickness came over her, and she let her head sink on her knees, not daring to see further. What fearful fierce orgie was she witnessing? The sound of voices speaking in indifferent tones, and the words that reached her ears, reassured her by degrees.

"Look out for your own, boys; and if there are any whose spalpeens of owners ain't here to claim them, let the captain say who's to have the handling of them." "The top of the morning to the beauties; see the glint of the sun on them." "Long life to them; now we've given them a happy resurrection, may they soon have a bloody baptism, and may they niver rest in pace again till they've done their work." "Toss the ould planks back into the

hole, boys; and hurry to cover them up, for the day is upon us, and it's far enough from this we'll be with these by our sides before night."

The meaning of the whole scene dawned on Ellen at the last words, and she sat up courageously and bent from her hiding-place to witness the end. The diggers, aided by many helpers, were now rapidly filling in the hole and replacing the sods on its surface; and on the ground where the coffin had lately stood lay a little pile of arms —pikes, guns, and muskets—with here and there an old sword whose handle, in spite of rust, glittered in the morning sun. When the last sod was replaced, two men who had hitherto stood on the outskirts of the crowd came a little forward, and standing on the refilled grave, began to hand out the arms. Their backs were turned to Ellen, but though no word was spoken while the distribution lasted, she knew perfectly well who they were. The taller of the two picked up the last of the muskets, stepped to the front, and spoke a few words in a low voice, distinct enough, however, for Ellen to distinguish every word:—

"Boys—brothers, the sun is up and we must disperse for a few more hours of silence and hiding; a few hours more and then we'll meet again, please God, never to part till our work is done. We're fewer this morning than I

thought we should be; but what of that? we feel like men now with arms in our hands. Hundreds all over Ireland are doing this hour what we have done, and in a little while we'll all be together—all the brave, true men that famine and oppression have left in the land. If our hearts are one, few or many, we'll be enough for what we have to do, boys. Now go home quietly, for you have each a treasure beyond price to guard—the weapon with which you are to strike for your country. We must not shout, but we'll stand silent together for a moment; and vow all of us low in our hearts, with this morning's sunlight on our heads, that we'll never cease the struggle till the night of oppression and wrong in Ireland is past, and the daylight of liberty bright over our land."

A dead silence, that yet seemed to Ellen to throb with emotion, followed when the eloquent voice ceased, and then there was a shuffling of feet and steps moving away in different directions, and in a few seconds more the churchyard was deserted by all but the two young men who had last spoken. These two, when the frieze-coated figures had all disappeared, passed through a gate of the churchyard that opened on the hill-side path, and stood for a few minutes talking together directly under Ellen's hiding-place.

"A mere handful of men," she heard Connor's voice say; "hardly worth the risk of our coming here to look them up. We had better have gone at once to join the main body in the South."

"If we only knew that by this time there is a main body," answered D'Arcy O'Donnel, in a desponding tone that struck Ellen in contrast with the hopeful words he had so lately spoken.

"You are not doubting it, surely?"

"No, no; but don't you feel a deadness? If things were going according to our hopes, I fancy we should feel it even here and now. There would be a thrill in the air all over Ireland, instead of this blank, that somehow, struggle against it as I will, weighs on me. The spirit of this district has changed since we were here last—only that handful!"

"But the notice has been so short. The few we have seen will whisper it about that we are here, and you will see what a gathering there will be at Dennis Malachy's old still to-night."

"Your henchman, Murdock, seems dispirited, however."

"Yes, and I'm sorry to see it, for he's a shrewd fellow. He says it's John Thornley's influence and Miss Maynard's money and kindness that have worked the change. O'Roone was harrying the boys into a ripe state for rebel-

lion. I wish I had spared my precious journey to London, and never sent that little witch, Miss Lesbia, to lull them into ignominious prosperity and content."

"My despair is to think that such a slight relaxation of misery should be enough to lull them into inaction. If it should be the same story everywhere—but we at least must not lose heart. Now for disposing of the next twelve hours. Shall we go at once to our quarters in the old still, or do you hold to your intention of hanging about Eagle's Edge for the chance of a sight of Ellen? You said something of it."

"In a sentimental mood. If I thought I could have a word with Ellen."

"Here, Connor dear, here!" and letting the cloak fall from her head, Ellen stepped down from her hiding-place on to the path and threw her arms round Connor's neck. "I have been watching you all the time from that seat under the peat cone on the hill," she said, in answer to their looks of dumb astonishment. "I left the Hollow before daybreak to walk home, meaning to catch the mail-cart here, and post a letter to forbid your coming home, you wicked, dangerous conspirators, and fate has turned me into a secret spy and witness of your treason. I have only to go straight to Mr. Thornley, or old O'Roone, and inform against you, to have you both put out of

the way of further harm; safe in prison for six months."

"We'll trust her, won't we, D'Arcy?" cried Connor joyfully. "May we never have a spy among us falser to the cause; but to think of your being there, and my first wish this morning granted before it was well out of my mouth. If that's not a good omen for the enterprise, D'Arcy, I don't know what we'll want to heighten our hopes."

"Or give us something better," said D'Arcy, who had not yet spoken; "when first and last wishes are granted, one is ready for whatever comes." Ellen shook hands with him in silence. The glance she had into his face told her that the last six months had altered him greatly. The bright enthusiastic countenance that had made such an impression on Connor when first seen a year ago was much worn now, and lined with anxious thought and mental suffering, young as it was. There was the same resolution upon it, but no longer the inspired look of hope; a degree of disappointment and awakening had evidently come to him, not sufficient, unhappily, to turn him from his purposes, but to send him forward with the determination of a man bound by honour to a desperate attempt rather than with the expectation of victory that is such an element in success. Ellen's heart was almost as

full of pity for him as of anxiety for Connor, whose lighter nature sent him into danger without misgiving, full of the excitement of the moment, and eager for action of any kind. They turned and began to climb the hill, as the quickest route by which they could escape observation from the road, along which the mail-car was coming; and when they had gained the summit, and were looking across the valley towards Eagle's Edge, Ellen said, "Come home to spend the day. Our house is nearer at hand than the old still, and you would sooner be sheltered. It is getting late for you to be abroad, if you don't want to be seen. You might meet Darby O'Roone himself on your road to the still, and the Green-coats seem to have multiplied tenfold during this last week, and to be about everywhere."

"But Pelham and my mother?"

"Pelham is from home to-day; he has gone to Galway on business, and mamma won't be very much surprised at your sudden appearance, for I told her your last letter held out a hope of your coming. If things should so turn out that you are not able to visit us again for a long time, this one day will be something for us all to look back upon and be glad of."

"What do you say, D'Arcy?"

"I say that if your sister will take the risk of sheltering us after what she has seen this morning, the day will

be, as she says, something to be glad of for ever after, wherever in space we take the recollection of it to."

"Come, D'Arcy, don't be tragic. The day is to be a jolly day. Mind you, Ellen, no entreaties or tears from anyone, or I'll not put myself in the way of them; and, Eileen aroon, there's no trickery in your thoughts? Swear to me you're not beguiling us home to get us into a trap, and keep us from fighting."

"No, Connor, no; I dare not, however much I may wish I could keep you out of harm's way. I know that there are things that would make life worthless, and I have no right to force dishonour on you or D'Arcy. Whatever the consequence of keeping your pledges may be, I can believe that nothing would be so hard for you as breaking them."

"That's right. She's a true Irishwoman, is she not, D'Arcy? Now take hold of hands, and let us have a race down the hill. Why, is not this the place we used to call Bogberry Gap, when we were children—the furthest point of our bogberry-gathering excursions from Castle Daly? Ah! and look, D'Arcy, before we begin to descend; that blue glimmer down there in the south-east is the head of our own lake, and there against the green hill you can just make out the Castle towers. I wonder what Miss Lesbia is thinking of down there this minute; not of me,

at any rate, the stony-hearted little flirt! She'll not have me risking my neck to get a sight of her this summer, anyhow. Ireland's my mistress to-day, and it's all the one I'll ever have to trouble my head about—hurrah!"

Thanks to Connor's gay spirits and determination to keep serious topics out of sight, the day at Eagle's Edge passed pleasantly, and even gaily, in conversation that chiefly turned on reminiscences of childish times, in discussing which D'Arcy grew as eager and interested as the two who had been concerned in them. They did not leave the house all day, but sat together in Mrs. Daly's favourite room at the back of the house, looking away from the road. Ellen did not know whether or not her mother was aware that any special cause for anxiety respecting Connor existed; but she seemed to take unusual pleasure in his company that day, and would hardly let him stir from the sofa by her side, but sat holding his hand as if he had been Pelham. Ellen tried to keep the two servants out of the room as much as possible, for all through the day she had an uneasy feeling that something unusual was going on outside the house. It might be far away, it might be near; but even in that secluded nook of the world there were signs of hurry and excitement. The high road, usually so quiet, had many passers on it, and countrymen and women, wearing troubled anxious faces,

came up to the house, on what Ellen felt were sham errands, and in spite of all she could say to dismiss them, lingered by the windows, or stood leaning against the kitchen door, staring into the house. Long before the sun set she began to wish that the day and the parting were over. Mrs. Daly, worn out with talk, fell asleep late in the afternoon; and Connor, leaving D'Arcy busy writing out an address, of which his mind was full, went with Ellen into the wide low passage that divided the house, and stood at the back door looking forth. The farmyard on which the back door opened was for the moment free of intruders, and had no tenants but its rightful occupants —long-eared Connaught pigs routing with their long noses among the straw, and hen-mothers cackling and scratching for the benefit of their broods. Connor amused himself for a few minutes by aiming bits of turf at the head of a slumberous sow, and raising false expectations among the feathered heads of families by sending showers of gravel in their neighbourhood; but his face grew graver and more absent as he went on, and as he tossed away the last sod, he turned to Ellen with a more serious look than his face had worn all day.

"Well," he began, "have those two made it up yet?"

"What two?"

"Oh, you know; Pelham and Lesbia. You need not

have been afraid to tell me, and I think I have a right to know all about it if anyone has."

"I should not have been a bit afraid, I assure you; but there's nothing to tell. Connor, can't you understand how it is? We're getting poorer and poorer; the three years of famine have fairly ruined us at last. There has not been a shilling of rent paid on the estate except for the Castle itself, and the creditors who hold mortgages on the land would have seized everything long since if Mr. Thornley had not paid the money and taken possession of their claims, on Lesbia's account, I believe; so that now every inch of the property, and even the Castle itself, belongs virtually to her. Can Pelham go a beggar to Lesbia and say, Give me back my inheritance and yourself too? It would be too barefaced."

"I don't see that. I'd have taken it all, if she would have given it to me, as kindly as the sunshine, and would have been proud to owe it to her, the kind-hearted, sparkling little jewel of a girl, that she is! Pelham's just a dull clod—worthy of his name to haggle so long over the bargain. Now I'll tell you what I'll do to give him a lift out of the bog of his own obstinacy. D'Arcy is a thought down-hearted to-day, and of course there's no denying that we are risking our necks and may come to grief, the whole lot of us. If this is to be the last you ever see of me, I'd

like to have done something for you before I vanish from the scene for evermore. When we were at Whitecliffe, and Miss Maynard was no heiress, but the little scrub you all looked down upon, I sent her a love-poem of my own, that must have shown her what I thought about her, and moreover had verses in it that D'Arcy himself would not need to be ashamed of—well, I'll turn over the whole credit of the thing to Pelham. Let him give her to understand that he sent it, and if, with that proof of the disinterestedness of his love to put before her, he daren't go and claim a return, he's a greater dolt than even I take him for."

"But, Connor dear, I'm afraid Pelham won't chose to woo in borrowed plumes, even if he thinks the poem worth offering in exchange for all the Castle Daly estates and their present mistress; and he won't do that, for he is not you!"

"The more shame, then, for him for a money-weighing Saxon, who does not know how to honour the bard; but you'll tell him, if I never see him again, how I wished at the last to wipe out old scores, and help to lift him up into all I would like well enough to have for myself. Heigho! D'Arcy's forebodings have taken hold of me. I did not think to feel like this the evening before we marched; the eve of Ireland's resurrection, that we've been looking to, and writing and singing of these two years."

"D'Arcy is full of forebodings, then?"

"Yes; it has been growing on him all the summer—no shrinking, but a presentiment of failure, and—I don't mind saying it to you—a doubt of the wisdom of the course of action resolved upon by the other leaders."

"Then why not withdraw, you and he? How I wish you would!"

"How could he, when his words, beyond anyone's, have urged it on? And for myself, where he goes I go, proud enough and glad enough to throw my life on the same cast that decides his. If he is to go down in the game, I'd be just ashamed to stand up safe; that's all about it with me. He says that the great bane of Ireland, the cause of all her failures, has been the dissensions among patriots and their lack of fidelity to each other, and that if half a dozen of us stick together to the last, in the bitterest moments of failure, we shall have done something to make the next attempt successful."

"But you ought to be prepared for emergencies. You may have to fly the country for your lives. Connor, have you any money?"

"Not a rap, either of us; there has been no pay from our newspaper for many weeks, for its issue has been stopped, and every penny you last sent me has gone in the club expenses. We are cleaned out. D'Arcy says it

does not matter, since we have hands and brains; but I confess that was one reason why I wanted to get a word with you this morning."

"We have a few pounds left in the chest up stairs, and I am sure mamma and Pelham will gladly let you have them; and it came into my mind this morning that I have two trinkets of value, which I should like to give you. One is the diamond ring that papa wore when he died. Pelham gave it to me. Keep it if you possibly can, but don't scruple to part with it to procure you means of living. The other trinket I thought of is an emerald hoop-ring that Marmaduke Pelham gave me on my birth-day the year we stayed at Pelham Court. Do you think D'Arcy would take it from me if I offered it as a farewell present when we part? It is worth several pounds, and might be of use to him if he wanted to get away."

"He would take it from you, but it would not answer the purpose you have in your mind. I should be sorry to think of his ever being in such straits as to be willing to part with it again."

"You don't know what may happen. Wait here till I come back."

Ellen was half-way down the passage on her way to her room when a loud knock at the front door of the house startled her. She ran back to Connor pale and breathless.

"What shall we do? The door must be opened at once, or they will come round here, whoever they are, and see you."

"Where can we go to be out of the way?"

"Mamma's bedroom will be the best place, for it can only be reached through the sitting-room, where mamma is sleeping. Go there at once, and call D'Arcy, softly, to follow you as you pass through. Take care not to awaken mamma, if you can possibly help it."

"Right! I'll go; but don't frighten yourself. Perhaps it's little Lesbia herself; and I'll court her for Pelham, and settle it all before I go."

The knock came again, before Connor's sentence was completed, and he walked towards the sitting-room, while Ellen flew down the hall, and stood before the door to secure its not being opened by the servant till the minute necessary for his disappearance had elapsed. When she lifted the latch she was confronted by two men in the dress of police officers, and saw in the distance two more, mounted, and holding the horses of their companions at the gate. Their faces were strange to her, and so was the accent in which they asked—

"Does Mr. Pelham Daly live here?"

"Yes," Ellen answered, "but he is from home. Your business, whatever it is, must wait till his return. Mr.

Daly's mother, who lives with him, has lately been very ill, and must not be disturbed or alarmed on any account."

"Very sorry, miss, but we have a warrant to search the house for arms, and time presses. We are obliged to do our duty."

"I am sure you will do it as considerately and quietly as possible then," Ellen answered, her courage rising with the greatness of the peril. "To prove the truth of my words and the necessity for quiet, I will take you into the room where my sick mother is asleep; and if you will stay there quietly, I will myself bring you the few arms we have in the house. I feel sure you will find there has been a mistake in your being sent here. Mr. Pelham Daly's loyalty has never been suspected."

"We have nothing to do with that, you see, miss. We have only to obey orders."

"Follow me, then, softly, if you please."

Ellen led the way to the little sitting-room at the back of the house, and, opening the door, noiselessly stepped back for the men to enter. The sight of Mrs. Daly tranquilly asleep on the sofa, with her worn, white cheek resting on her thin jewelled hand, had quite as much effect on the intruders as she expected when she brought them there. They drew back a little from the door, and looked at each other sheepishly.

"No need for us to go in there, miss," the elder of the two said, carefully scanning Ellen's face as he spoke; "I will stand in the hall, and my mate will go round the house with you. Stay, though, for form's sake, I'll step inside and take a seat till you come back."

Ellen feared that some sudden look of relief on her face had caused this change of purpose, and her heart sank, but she did not dare to object. She pointed silently to a seat near the door, and then led the man, followed by the younger officer, to Pelham's bedroom, where there was a case of pistols and a gun leaning against the wall. These the man secured, and carried into the hall, opening the doors of the other rooms, and looking in as he stepped backwards and forwards. Then he asked to be shown the servants' rooms; and Ellen led him a bewildering circuit through cross passages and empty rooms that brought him out to the front of the house again.

"It's a vast dreary place for so few people to live in; I wonder you like it," the man remarked, shrugging his shoulders, as he looked up at the reeking damp-stains and forlorn shreds of paper hanging from the wet walls. "We should pull such a worn-out old pile down in my country, and build up a snug farmhouse in its place."

"It was not too large for us once," Ellen said; "and

since the famine it would be as difficult to find people to pull it down as to fill it."

"True enough; it's all a strange sight to us. We've been sent over from England to help to keep the people over here quiet, as we supposed; and, as far as we've seen, there don't seem to be no people about; nothing but ruined villages and waste lands as we can see. I'll take these here pistols away with me, by your leave, miss; you'll have no need of them now we're here to keep the peace; and I'll trouble you no further but to go round and tell my mate I'm ready to go."

Long as the time had seemed to Ellen, the inspection had in reality only occupied a few minutes. Mrs. Daly was still asleep when she reached the door of the sitting-room, and the police-officer, in the same spot where she had left him, was occupied in replacing a bulky pocket-book, whose contents he had apparently been examining, into the pocket of his coat. At Ellen's sign, he came out into the passage, and met her with a smile of satisfaction on his face that she could not understand.

"You need not have alarmed yourself, miss; we've done no harm, you see," he remarked, when Ellen gave him his comrade's message.

"I don't know how it may be in your country," Ellen answered, "but here lonely women do not ex-

pect to be intruded on when the master of the house is away."

"We were sorry to disturb you, miss, but we had our orders; and when all things come to be looked into, I fancy you'll find that we have only done what was necessary, and taken away what it was our business to take. Good-day to you."

Ellen followed the man to the door, and watched the little cavalcade, as it wound along the road, till it was lost behind the hill; then she ran back into the sitting-room, and threw herself on her knees by her mother's sofa. Never had she been so thankful for anything in her life as that Mrs. Daly's afternoon slumber had been so deep and lasted so long; and then so strange did it seem that those white lids should have remained closed so long with no weightier seal than that of sleep upon them, that a sudden fear seized her, and she stooped and pressed her lips on her mother's eyes to assure herself that the warmth of life was in them still. Mrs. Daly started up awake at last.

"My dear, have I slept too long? Where are Connor and D'Arcy? You have not let them go without saying good-bye to me?"

"No, dear mamma," Ellen said, struggling hard to speak naturally; "but I am not sorry I have awakened you, for

I think the time when they will have to say good-bye has nearly come."

"Then make Molly bring some tea. We must not let them start on their walking tour fasting. You should have wakened me sooner."

And when, at the sound of her voice, Connor and D'Arcy appeared from the next room, she began so eagerly to urge their remaining for another meal, that nothing struck her as unusual in their look or manner. Ellen slipped away to hasten the appearance of the supper, and stop the clack of tongues among the servants, and in a few minutes D'Arcy and Connor followed her to exchange hand shakes and looks of congratulation, since they could not venture on words.

"True as steel," Connor whispered; "did not I know you would be?"

"It was instinct, not reason," Ellen answered; "and oh, Connor avourneen, I hope—I hope I have done right, and not wrong by you. Perhaps I shall have to regret it all my life; for I believe you would be safer if you were now riding away a prisoner with those men, who are looking for you, than you will ever be again when you have left this house; yet I did not even think of betraying you."

"And you may take this for your comfort, that if you had, and the fighting had come off while I was locked up,

I'd have revenged myself on you by blowing my brains out the very first day I was set at liberty. Nothing but that and the haunting afterwards would have equalled your deserts."

D'Arcy seemed disposed to linger over that last meal in Mrs. Daly's little sitting-room; but Connor, who was struggling to keep up his spirits to nonsense-pitch to the last moment, and signally failing every now and then, was in haste to be gone. Their plan was to wait at the old still till midnight, and then march southward with the comrades, who were to join them there, confidently expecting that before the morning dawned they should find themselves at the head of such a force that only an organised body of troops would attempt to stop their progress.

"The true-hearted among the soldiers will come out and join us," Connor averred to Ellen, when, after tea, she came into the hall with him to slip the little purse of money she had got together into his soldier's knapsack.

"But supposing no one joins you at the still to-night?" she asked.

"We shall go alone to Tipperary," D'Arcy, who was standing near, answered. "I read what you are thinking in your face. The domiciliary visits, of which we have

had a specimen, show greater alertness on the part of the authorities than we expected, and it is possible that very many arrests on suspicion have been made to-day, and that most of those who sympathise with us about here are put out of the way of helping us; but we two have escaped for the present, and an hour or two's travelling will take us among our friends who will have had better luck than ourselves. At all events, we are determined to show among them, however it may be going."

"And how shall I know how it is going?"

"It will be in the air; no fear of your not knowing."

Ellen now rose from her knees by the knapsack, and D'Arcy came near and took her hands in his.

"I have been asking myself all day," he said, "whether I am most glad or most sorry for the circumstances that make my individual fate of no special consequence to any human being. When the doubt that for the last six weeks has been growing upon me predominates, I can conscientiously say I am glad, and even thankful, to you for leaving me the lonely man I am. If, as I begin to fear, a glorious struggle even is denied to us, and only the bitter dregs of ignominious failure given to us to wring out, it will be something in the torture of it to know that my share of the shame and ridicule that will be cast on us will weigh on no one but myself; that I can be tossed

away as a tool broken from all its uses without involving any other life in the ignominious ruin."

"No, D'Arcy, no," Ellen said, looking up to him with eyes full of tears; "you can't, you must not say so, or you will break our hearts. You are a brother to Pelham and me almost as dear as Connor, and whatever happens to you, and wherever you go, our thoughts and our love will follow you; and not only ours, but those of the hundreds whose hearts your words have touched, and who will have better or worse hopes for Ireland all their lives as you prove yourself strong or weak in whatever comes. Here, I want you to take a token from me—a little bit of 'the green' that is to pledge you not to throw your life away in any moment of bitterness, but to keep it for Ireland's service when the way of serving her best is clearer to us all."

Ellen took Marmaduke Pelham's ring from her finger as she spoke and put it into D'Arcy's hands, who tried to speak in answer, but failed, and after stooping down and pressing the lips that trembled too much for speech on the hands he still held, he walked away down the hall, and leaned against the open door of the house, till Connor came from the inner room, where he had been taking leave of his mother, to join him. A slender silver thread of the waxing harvest moon was beginning to show in the sky

when the young men left the house arm in arm, and crossing the level space at the back, were soon climbing the side of Lac-na-Weel. Ellen watched them till they were no more than black specks against the green, and then went back to sit by her mother's sofa, and listen with a heavy foreboding heart to her regrets at Connor's wandering habits, and thankfulness that Pelham was different, and could be trusted always to stay by her. What should she do if anything ever happened to take Pelham away?

CHAPTER VII.

"When Love with unconfined wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wander in the air
Know no such liberty."

"No, Wattie, there is no use in your trying to play tricks on me about the letters now, because if you do I shall feel obliged to send you back to Whitecliffe, and take away the gun and sword I gave you when you came here," said Lesbia, looking up with dignity from behind the silver tea-urn she was presiding over, at her little cousin who was executing an insulting war-dance before her face, with the letter-bag concealed behind his back. "I can't think how it is that you don't learn to treat me with more respect, Wattie, now that you are staying with me at Castle Daly, and I am so kind to you and make you so many presents. Now don't you think he ought to

treat me differently, John?" she continued, appealing to her brother, who stood with his back to the fireplace tranquilly watching the contest.

"I can't say. Perhaps Wattie is a clothes-philosopher, like Professor Teufelsdrockh, whose life you decline to study, and he is taking this picturesque method of expressing his conviction that nothing more respectable exists under all your toggery than the original little Babette whom he was brought up to bully."

"I wish you would make him give up the letter-bag, however, John. Don't you want the *Times* yourself?"

"No; it will be full of the Irish rebellion, and we know more about it than they do out there."

"The Irish rebellion! Why, is there a rebellion? Has it really begun, and you stand warming your back there as quietly as if you did not care what happened to us all?"

"I am warming my back because I have been up all night writing letters and transacting business, and I am very tired; and as for the rebellion, I believe, or at least I hope, that it is virtually over, and that throughout Ireland, as about here, the active spirits who were looking forward to a general scrimmage will awake this morning in safe keeping, comfortably stowed in prison out of the way of mischief."

"Oh, John! was that what you were doing all yesterday, when you went out so early and did not get back till after dark?"

"Do you take me for a police officer? or do you suppose that I have power to realise the Roman emperor's wish, with a difference, and concentrate all the rebels in Ireland in one prison-van?"

"But you were busy all day; and, John, do you know that I saw James Morris shaking his fist at you, and making the most horrid possible grimaces behind your back?"

"I hope it relieved his feelings."

"You *had* been helping to send people to prison, then, I am sure. If Connor Daly had been one of the rebels brought before you, what should you have done?"

"He was not one; but it would perhaps have been the best thing that could have happened to him if he had been, for I fear he has left Dublin. Now, Wattie, we have had enough of those antics. Give up the letter-bag to me and come to breakfast."

"You ought to be extremely anxious, if you have the least affection for your poor mother," said Lesbia reproachfully, "for there is most likely a letter from Bride in it to tell us how she is."

Under this reproof, and with the prospect of a hot

scone spread with honey, which Lesbia placed before him, Wattie surrendered the bag and subsided into his breakfast, and the brother and sister, after dividing its contents, proceeded to open their budgets and impart sentences from their contents to each other.

"Mrs. Maynard is not so well, I am sorry to say, and Bride is in despair at the prospect of the Irish rebellion coming off in her absence, Lesbia," said John.

"And oh, John," exclaimed Lesbia, "this is from Louisa Pelham, and her brother's regiment has been ordered to Galway, and she seems to think we ought to ask him to come and stay here."

"Captain Pelham will be otherwise employed than in paying visits, if there is truth in this, or foreshadowing of truth, as is sometimes the case with rumours," said John, gravely, as he ran his eye rapidly over a paragraph in a paper he had just unfolded. "This looks as if other districts had been less successful in disposing of their rebels than we have been about here. Listen: 'The following intelligence was received last evening in Dublin. The whole of the south of Ireland is in rebellion. The station at Thurles is on fire, and the rails torn up by the mob. At Clonmel the fighting is dreadful; the people arrive in masses; the Dublin Club leaders are there. The troops were

speedily overpowered; many refused to act. At Kilkenny the contest is proceeding, and there, too, the mob is said to be successful.'"

"Do you think it is true, John? It sounds just like what Connor Daly expected would happen. I hope the rebels won't come here, or at all events not unless he is with them, to make them behave well to us, as he promised he would."

"Promised! What do you mean, Lesbia? Have you seen Connor Daly lately, and where? How came he to make you such an idiotic promise? You had better tell me the truth, Lesbia, at once. Connor Daly's whereabouts may prove to be of consequence to more people than himself just now, and unacknowledged communications from him, if you have to confess to them by and by, would be very compromising to you. You had better take me into your confidence in time."

"Don't frighten me to death, if you please, John, or I shall not be able to remember a word of what you want me to tell you. There is no occasion whatever for you to put yourself into such a fuss. I have not seen Connor Daly since we left London."

"Connor Daly was never in London, as far as I know."

"No, not as far as you know, I acknowledge; but I think it is very hard that I should be made to confess

things of this kind at breakfast-time, with people looking on and listening," said Lesbia, glancing at little Walter Maynard, and beginning to sob.

"If you are afraid of Wattie we will wait till breakfast is over," John answered a little severely, and turning back to his letters he opened and read one after another with gradually increasing anxiety on his face, while Lesbia, with all disposition for breakfast taken away, sat silent behind her urn, and tried hard to work herself into a state of indignation, hot enough to enable her to withstand John's efforts to intrude into her confidence. She was not prepared for the gentleness and gravity of his manner when, after sending Wattie out of the room, he came near and seated himself by her side. "Now, little one, I have not much time to spare this morning, and I am sure you will forgive me if I seem abrupt or over anxious. More important consequences may be involved in the matter we have to discuss than you or perhaps any of us can foresee as yet, and I can't judge how to shield you most effectually unless you are quite open with me. You need not be afraid of surprising me. Bride and I have been dreading to hear it for some time past."

"Dreading to hear what Connor Daly said to me about the Irish rebellion?"

"Lesbia, I think you must understand me better than that. What I mean is that we have feared to hear that you were engaged to him."

"Then I must say that I think you are both very unkind, and that it is a shame," cried Lesbia, drawing herself away from her brother, and looking at him with tearful, flashing eyes. "You have no right to think so meanly of me as that I should have engaged myself to Connor, or anyone, secretly. I dare say you have let other people know what you believe, and put it into *their* heads to suspect me, and think poorly of me, too. It would be just like you."

"No, Babette, it would not be at all like us; and you don't in the least mean what you are saying now," John answered smiling.

"I mean it would be just like what is always happening—just the way things fall out here—to make people misunderstand me, and fancy I like what I don't like, and take offence and be unkind to me," sobbed Lesbia.

"Come, Baby, do try to be a sensible child for once," pleaded John in despair at the sight of her tears. "Leave the general public alone and try to keep to the matter in question. We will say nothing about an engagement since the word offends you. What I require you to tell me is, what amount of understanding does

at present exist between you and Connor Daly, and how you came to see him unknown to all your friends?"

"Bride says," began Lesbia, drawing away her hands from her face, and assuming an aspect of dignified reserve, "that it is extremely unbecoming in a woman to speak of —of—admiration that she does not return, and I told you of Captain Pelham's offer, which perhaps I ought not to have done. You must not expect me to betray people's feelings *every* time they speak of them to me."

"You would not waste my time in this fashion, Lesbia, if you knew how much depended on my getting the information I want you to give me at once. Perhaps, though, all that is immediately necessary is that you should tell me where you saw Connor Daly last, and when he made the extraordinary promise you quoted just now about protecting you during the rebellion."

"I have told you once, and you did not believe me. The last time I saw poor Connor was in London, on St. Patrick's Day, at the ball, when I wore my Limerick lace dress and the shamrocks, and he promised to take care of us through the rebellion when he and I were in the balcony together, just before you took me down to supper."

"What brought him to London, then?"

"He came to see me. Yes, you may look surprised,

John. *You* don't think me worth all that trouble, because I am only your little sister, whom you don't think highly of; but I am not everybody's sister."

"I am not surprised at Mr. Connor Daly's taking the trouble to come to London to see you; but at his having the coolness to force himself upon you unknown to your friends. He was perfectly aware you were worth the trouble of a journey. Though he is acting the part of a fool just now, I give him credit for being quite a sufficiently wideawake young gentleman to know that."

"Yes, John, you think he cares for me only for my money; but is it not rather hard in you to be so sure of that? Why should not I count for something—just for a little something, too—with somebody; and, if I do, why should not a person forget about my money, and speak to me as another girl might be spoken to? It is not that part of Connor Daly's conduct I see any fault in."

"Yet you say you are not engaged."

"No. One is not obliged to take a person because one believes he likes one sincerely, though you do think that such a marvellous thing is to happen to me. I could not accept Connor Daly's honest liking, not because he was poor and I was rich—I hate to think of that as a barrier—but because—and he found it out that night; oh, John

I am so unhappy that I can't help telling you, though you will despise me for it—because I love another person better; and he is like you, John—he can't forget about my money. Sometimes I almost hate him for thinking of that more than of me, for I know he loves me; but oftenest I feel that even if he never speaks kindly to me again I shall love him always better than anyone else in the world. Bride would think it dreadful of me to say this, and you will despise me, but I cannot help speaking. I am so unhappy."

"I am very far indeed from despising you, my dear little sister; you are a brave child for telling me the whole truth. As this is so with you, you and I must help each other to put personal thoughts out of our minds for the present. I fear that very dark times are coming on our friends. It is hard for you to hear the news I have to tell just upon this confidence, but you will have to hear it sooner or later."

"Oh, let me hear at once. Is it that Pelham—that the Dalys are in trouble about Connor?"

"They are, or will soon be, in great anxiety about Connor, for I see in one of this morning's newspapers that a proclamation has been issued offering large rewards for the arrest, on charge of high treason, of the Dublin Club leaders, and Connor Daly's name is in the list."

"Would he be hanged?"

"If he is taken and convicted of high treason he is liable to be hanged."

"But if the news in this morning's paper should prove to be correct, and the rebels are succeeding?"

"It will be the most temporary success, and every moment of it makes the case of those who incited the rising worse than before. For their sakes, as well as on every other account, we must hope and pray that it may be put down in a few hours—before there has been time for great crimes to be committed. While the alarm lasts, suspicion will be rife everywhere, and innocent people, if they have enemies, may be involved with the guilty. I have a letter here from old O'Roone. It seems that while I was at Westport yesterday, an order was sent out to search Eagle's Edge for arms, and that letters and papers of a highly treasonable character were seized by the police and brought away. O'Roone discovered—or pretended to discover—that some of the most damaging of these papers were in Pelham Daly's handwriting, and sent a warrant to arrest him late last night on his return from Galway, where it seems he has been for two days on private business, unluckily without my knowledge. Pelham refuses to account in any way for his possession of the papers, and it has been decided to send him, with others who were

arrested yesterday with arms in their hands, this morning to prison in Galway. O'Roone pleads the urgent necessity of the time and the danger of a rescue being attempted if the prisoners are allowed to remain at Ballyowen, as an excuse for this haste; but I am afraid there is spite in it, and that it shows a determination on his part to inflict as much hardship on young Daly as he can while he has the power."

"Oh, John, John, and it was for my sake that he made the O'Roones his enemies! and I was comfortably asleep in bed last night while all this was happening, and I have eaten my breakfast and talked and laughed this morning."

"Little one, you must be reasonable; you must try to keep calm, or I shall not be able to trust you. You and I must both remember that these are dear, dearest friends, but that they have not chosen we should be anything more to them, and even in this time of trial we have no right——"

"No, John, no; *I* won't remember any such thing. *You* may do as you like: but while they are suffering I shall not think of rights or of anything but how I can best serve them. If afterwards they should choose to despise my service, I shall not complain. I shall go quite away from them and bear it as well as I can; but I shall never be sorry that I did what I could, when everyone else was against them."

"It was for you I was trying to be wise, not for myself, Babette; but I believe you are right, and that you will make no mistake in following your generous heart-instincts. I will trust you, and not hold you back in anything you wish to do. We will act together."

"But perhaps we can do nothing I talked of *afterwards;* but oh, John, perhaps there will be no afterwards; you said a dreadful thing would happen if Connor were taken."

"And convicted of treason. But Connor has committed himself by word and writing and by participation in illegal acts, whereas there can be nothing against Pelham except these papers; and even if he refuses to explain how they came into his possession, I don't suppose anything worse can happen to him than imprisonment while the present state of things lasts, and the magistrates have power to keep suspected persons in confinement. Perhaps he may even be detained for six months, but it can't be longer."

"In prison for six months! Mrs. Daly will die of misery long before the six months are over."

"The treasonable proclamations were no doubt sent or brought to Eagle's Edge by Connor or young O'Donnell. When you spoke of Connor, I thought you might have seen him, and be able to prove that he had been in the neighbourhood lately. Perhaps the papers were sent to

Ellen. Ah, I owe Pelham service indeed for the part he is acting, if it is for her sake, to keep her name from being talked of, perhaps to spare her the agony of having to testify against her lover, that he refuses to clear himself."

"I wonder if Mrs. Daly and Ellen are alone at Eagle's Edge now. How desolate they will feel!"

"The first thing to be done is for you to go to them; you must offer to bring them here, of course, if they will come. I shall ride at once to Ballyowen, see old O'Roone, and learn all I can from him. If the prisoners have not already been sent off to Galway, I will see Pelham and consult with him on what is best to be done. If I miss him in Ballyowen, I think I had better go on to Galway myself, and wait there till I can get access to him. In the present state of feeling, it may not be easy even for a person as well known as I am to communicate with prisoners supposed to be rebels; but you may tell Mrs. Daly that no efforts shall be spared. I shall go on to Dublin if I see that anything can be done for him there."

"And John, dear John, don't think me very foolish; but if you should see him, and if he should look very unhappy, would you mind telling him that I have gone to his mother, and that I don't mean to leave her again till he is set free? I have seen him look so very much pleased

when I have paid any little attention to her, that I can't help believing it would comfort him to hear that."

"Well, run and get ready; I will order the car round, and James Morris shall drive you to Eagle's Edge. He is always eager to see his former young mistress, and I will indulge him to-day, though he is an arrant rebel, and though he does make grimaces at me behind my back."

"And, John, you are not angry with me about—the message?"

"No, no, I will see what can be done; but, considering all things, it is perhaps as well that Mrs. Joseph Maynard's rheumatic fever continues obstinate, and that Bride is not here to criticise our sayings and doings."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Hide, blushing Glory, hide
That day among the cabbages."

It was well for Lesbia that she had by this time overcome the nervousness that had once made a car-ride along the rough roads round Castle Daly a painful experience, for James Morris set out on the road to Eagle's Edge at a great pace, and only relaxed his exertions to lean over from his driving seat at intervals and whisper into Lesbia's ear an emphatic assurance that she might trust him to bring her in the twinkling of an eye to them with whom her heart was; and God bless her for being in all the mad haste and the hurry she was to comfort them. The way to Eagle's Edge lay for a mile or two along the public road to Ballyowen, and by the shore of the lake, till a certain cross road leading up among the hills was reached. About a quarter of a mile before they came to this turning, Lesbia's eye was attracted by the appearance of a little

crowd of people on the summit of an eminence they were beginning to mount. They came in sight in detachments, first a barefooted advanced guard, that appeared to be running on in front of, then turning back to gaze at, something—some procession following behind; then the heads of two files of mounted policemen, carrying arms, appeared above the crest of the hill, and between them, two and two, walked slowly a string of other men. Their figures and their motions grew distinct, as they began to descend the slope, and Lesbia perceived that they were bound together hand and foot, prisoners. James Morris drew up his horse suddenly, as the meaning of the scene dawned on him, and a fierce oath burst from his lips.

"Will we have to pass him on the road, Miss Lesbia?" he said, turning back to look at her.

"Who, James?" she asked, in a trembling voice, struggling hard to put back the recognition that every moment brought nearer. "It can't be anyone we know. No one we know could be treated like that."

"It *is*, then; it's young Mr. Daly, and the boys who were taken yesterday for marching with their pikes across the hill. Look for yourself! It's him that goes first. Who but a Daly would hould his head up and walk like that, proud and stately, whatever they do to him? And that one wid the green coat riding near, who is stoop-

ing down to spake to him now, with the devil's own spiteful sneer on his ugly face, is the thundering villain, Darby O'Roone. May ivery curse he has iver earned be paid to him to the last mite, and I can't wish him worse than that. Look for yourself, then, Miss Lesbia, dear!"

But Lesbia could not summon courage to look; her eyes were fascinated by the wild rage that convulsed her companion's face, as, throwing the reins on the horse's neck, he sprang upon the driving seat and shook both fists with impotent anger towards O'Roone; then, with a sudden change of mood, he jumped down to the ground, and coming to the side of the car where Lesbia sat, and looking humbly in her face, said in the tone of a child making a confession, "Miss Lesbia, once Mr. Connor and I played the young master there a spiteful trick anint a dog he cared for, and now I'd like to go down on my bare knees on the road and ax his pardon. It's not 'the cause' that brings him to this. It's not that he has 'the cause' at heart like Mr. Connor; it is that he won't turn informer agin his own people to save himself. Glory be to God for that same. I'd go down on my bare knees this minute to thank him for it."

"I will get down and stand in the road, I think

James," said Lesbia, putting out a little hand to be helped from the car. "I—I—think I shall like it better."

She was trembling so that she had to lean against the side of the car to support herself as she stood, and she put up her hands to hide her face. The tramp of horse hoofs and feet came nearer and nearer. Should she look up at him as he passed? Would it be better or worse for him to meet her eyes? Would he read in them how she loved him? Would he know that it was a thousand thousand times more than it had ever been before, for seeing him thus, with gyves on his wrists, bearing insult and suffering for his brother's sake? Surely yes, and surely in that hard hour there would be some help, some warmth to his heart from knowing what filled hers to such painful overflowing. Lesbia took her hands down and stood quite upright, as her determination was made. The procession of prisoners was now nearly opposite the car, and young O'Roone had made a sign to the police-officers to stop; and jumping from his horse, was evidently preparing to address her. Lesbia walked boldly forward to meet him. He approached with a meaning look of evil triumph on his face, that filled her with disgust.

"An uncomfortable meeting this, Miss Maynard, is it not?" he drawled in an affected voice. "I fear such a sight as this must be distressing to English eyes, but,

at all events, I hope it will have the effect of reassuring you as to the tranquillity of the country. If you look round you will see how satisfactorily *all* our would-be disturbers of the peace are disposed of. Let me invite you to look round."

"Thank you," said Lesbia, "that was exactly what I was intending to do, for I have a message for a friend I see among the crowd there. Stand aside, Mr. O'Roone, if you please, and let me pass."

Then drawing her dress close round her, so that it might not touch him, Lesbia brushed past and walked up to Pelham Daly, the crowd of hangers-on instinctively making way at the sight of her rich dress and the little pale face that tried to look proud, and was only quivering with feeling.

"Mr. Daly—Pelham," she said, putting both her hands on his manacled wrists, "I am glad I have met you. I am on my way now to Eagle's Edge, to stay with your mother till she has you with her again. Can you give me any message for her that will comfort her for you?"

Pelham had only a minute before known who was near him. All through the slow march from Ballyowen his thoughts had been full of another occasion when he had traversed that same road with a crowd of ragged observers

at his back, the centre of attraction and remark to them all. He had been almost smiling at the recollection of the bitter thoughts that had been aroused in his mind by that observation then. That he should ever have thought he had anything to complain of when he was receiving a tumultuous welcome to a hospitable joyous home was a curious enough reflection to haunt him just now. He remembered that when they reached the top of the next ascent the turrets of Castle Daly would be in sight, and with the thought came a vivid picture of how the Castle had looked on that particular day, as he and his uncle approached it. The front door standing wide, the shouting huzzaing crowd of servants and tenants, his father standing above, stretching out eager hands of welcome, and looking down into his face with loving eyes that asked for sympathy. While this vision was before him, filling his mind with regretful yearnings, he heard a voice that made him start, a timid touch caressed his hands, and looking up he met once more a beseeching look of love, that again seemed to ask admittance into his heart, not to be put back by any conventionalities, for any stubborn pride this time. His eyes filled with sudden tears, but he was not ashamed of them, he would not have cared if the whole universe had been looking on at him then. For him, at that moment, there was nothing in

existence but the little white anxious face turned up to his. Love had asserted itself over the whole of his being now, and somehow he felt, and had time in that instant to feel, that it was his father, as well as Lesbia, who was calling on him to rise above the spirit of self-regarding pride, and be true to love in that hour.

"God bless you for coming to speak to me to-day. God bless you for ever, Lesbia," he said in a deep earnest voice that everyone around heard. "Tell my mother that you saw and spoke to me—nothing else—and she will be comforted for me, for she will understand that after that nothing will hurt me."

It hardly took a minute for the two sentences, and for the look between, that bound two souls so closely together that nothing outward could ever come in again to separate them. O'Roone rushed forward with a frantic oath, and ordered the march to proceed instantly. Lesbia felt herself violently thrust aside towards the edge of the road, and the minute after the cavalcade was far on its way down the side of the hill proceeding at a rapid pace; and she was standing with her back against a stone wall, surrounded by a little crowd of people whom the rapid movement of the march had left behind. A red cloaked old crone came up, threw her arms round her neck and kissed her, and a bare-footed, bare-headed girl flung herself on her

knees before her in the road, seized her hand and covered it with kisses.

"I hope your ladyship will pardon us for touching you," the old woman said; "we know we ought not to do it, but we can't help it, for our hearts as well as yours are wid the boys they are carrying off. All the son I have is among them, and Mary there, on her knees—shure it is her own bachelor, the boy that was to have married her on Sunday, that was walking along wid him that you own, foot to foot, and wrist to wrist, wid young Mr. Daly; and it came over her to thank you for what you said to him; her boy has a mother that'll want comforting too. Shure you 'ill forgive us the freedom we've taken, that came from our hearts."

"Come to Castle Daly and talk to me about your son," Lesbia said, while the deep rich colour rushed back into her cheeks at the old woman's words, and then—she could not quite understand afterwards how she came to do such a thing, except that her heart was very full of tender yearning, and longing to comfort some one—she stooped down, and, kissing the kneeling girl on the forehead, whispered low in her ear, "You too must come and see me, and tell me all about him that was walking by Mr. Daly, and I think we shall both have them back soon."

How she finally extricated herself she hardly knew, but the people followed her to the car, and a dozen hands were raised to help her in, and busied in settling the rug about her feet, and their voices followed her with emphatic blessings to the turn of the road that led up among the quiet hills. It was a relief to be among the mountains, with only their sunshiny green heads overlooking her; for James Morris judiciously turned his back, and, with his eyes fixed on his horse's ears, whistled "The Wearing of the Green" uninterruptedly till they reached Eagle's Edge. Lesbia could lean over on the cushion of the car, and, unobserved, weep out her excitement and question the strange new joy that, in spite of anxieties, would send irresistible thrills through her. "Him that you own." Yes, it was *that* she had done. She had *owned* him; she, herself, among that ragged crowd, with his greatest enemy looking on. Poor, in danger, accused of crime, a lover whose homage would not be esteemed an honour by most people. What would Bride, what would the Pelhams, what would Aunt Joseph say to such a termination of her young lady career? It was very unlike anything she had ever planned for herself. She used to imagine giving herself away with great ceremony some day to some one whose choice would raise her in her own estimation and in the world's. Then the chief purpose of courtship had

appeared to be gratification of vanity, and love had only meant homage to herself. It did not mean that now; this feeling that had come to her had no room for gratified vanity, no place for self in it, and yet how much better it was than anything she had ever known!

Her tears had been long since dried when the car drove up to the house door at Eagle's Edge, and she began to be afraid that she should bring into the house a face inconsistently joyful with the purport of her visit. There was no one at hand to take the car, and though both doors of the house stood wide open, and the sunshine was pouring in, the place had a melancholy, deserted look, as if there was no longer anything in it that anybody cared to guard. Lesbia, after knocking in vain, entered, and made her way into the sitting-room usually occupied by Mrs. Daly, and waited. Soon Ellen's face, pale and anxious, appeared at the door of the inner room, and, catching sight of Lesbia, brightened, as she came forward to shake hands with her.

"You have heard what has happened," Ellen said in a weary, hopeless voice, that, coming from her, showed plainly how much she had suffered. "You know that they have taken Pelham from us, and mamma, poor mamma! it was like tearing her life away. She is sleeping now, in there. Dr. Lynch came this morning;

he set out from the Hollow as soon as the news reached them there, and was with us early, or I don't know what I should have done. He gave mamma an opiate, and she is sleeping quietly at last; but I dread what her waking will be. I can't keep her from thinking the very worst. She will not believe that she shall ever see him again."

"Let me go to her when she wakes," said Lesbia; "I have something to tell her that will comfort her. Dear Ellen, only think, I met him on the road just now, and spoke to him, and he gave me a message to bring here."

Ellen did not think the circumstance of this meeting so important or consoling as to warrant the look of blushing exultation with which Lesbia announced it; but she was disposed to catch at any comfort that came, and make the most of it.

"You actually saw Pelham, did you, Lesbia? Well, I believe there will be some comfort for mamma in your having seen him this morning. It will convince her that he was safe and well up to the time when you met him. And yet she was dreading to know that he had actually left the neighbourhood. Dr. Lynch promised her that she should go to Ballyowen to be near him if she would try to sleep and get strong enough."

"They have gone to Galway."

"That is too far for us to follow. I could not go so far from Anne O'Flaherty in the state she is now."

"But if I were with your mother, could not she and I go to Galway together? You would trust me to take care of her, would you not? I—I promised your brother just now that I would stay with you and her till he was restored to you, and he was glad; he said, 'Nothing would hurt him, knowing that.' This was the message I was to give you."

The full significance of the meeting began to dawn on Ellen now, and she threw her arms round Lesbia's neck.

"Babette, dear Babette, how very good you are! but will your brother and sister really let you stay with us, and be a daughter to mamma, while disgrace and danger hang over both the boys? Are you really come to take your place among us just now, when we are brought so low, when everyone is against us?"

"Will you let me in? Do you love me enough? Do you think me good enough?" whispered Lesbia, clinging to her; and then the two girls embraced again, and shed a few tears together.

"How I wish mamma were awake that I might take you to her at once," Ellen cried. "You will be better to her than sleep. I little thought that any light could

come to us this dark day; but you have brought it, for I know now that Pelham is walking to prison this minute with a light heart. Lesbia, I will tell you something. He and I were sitting just here, talking about you, at the very moment that it happened, when the summons came for him to go."

"It was late last night, was it not?" questioned Lesbia, with a look in her eyes that implored—"Tell me everything, every word."

"It was late, and we were sitting nearly in the dark. There was a fire in the grate at which I had broiled some eggs for Pelham's supper, and there was a faint light from the moon; but that was all the light we had. Mamma had gone to bed, and he and I had been sitting together talking for half an hour. He had returned from Galway only an hour before, and had been telling me of the disappointment his visit there had been to him, since the person who had appointed to meet him there never appeared. We think now that the appointment was a ruse of Darby O'Roone's to get Pelham out of the way while they were plotting against him, and to throw an air of mystery over Pelham's doings just now. The day had been a very anxious one to me, too, and Pelham brought news that increased my fears. He had heard in Galway that Connor's name was in the list of Dublin Club leaders,

against whom arrests on charge of high treason are out. While we talked sorrowfully of Connor I gave Pelham a foolish affectionate message Connor had sent to him. I can't tell you when and how; but I told Pelham all, and he was very much touched. There was an allusion to you in this message, and, discussing that, Pelham branched off to speak of his love for you, and of the circumstances that forbade his ever letting you know it. I was listening and thinking, I had two brothers whose hearts I could be proud of, though they were so different one from the other, when there came a knock at the front door that I knew the meaning of in a moment. I was half frantic, and wanted to drag Pelham away to hide him somewhere, but he would not let me; he went to the door himself and brought in our untimely visitors. They proved to be, as I expected, the two police sergeants who had searched our house in the middle of the day—and with them was Darby O'Roone, who had come for his own pleasure, I think, to triumph over us in our trouble. They began to question Pelham about some letters and papers taken by one of the sergeants from a portfolio that happened to be on this table when I stupidly left him alone in this room on his first visit. O'Roone was loud and insolent—bent on entrapping Pelham into some admissions that would tell against him; but the Englishmen

were civil enough at first, evidently only wanting information. They had heard of the rewards offered for Connor's arrest, and they hoped to get a clue to his whereabouts from Pelham or me, believing that he was somewhere in the neighbourhood then. Pelham could easily have satisfied them, and saved himself from any annoyance, if he had chosen. But, of course, he did not choose. He was very quiet and firm all the time, and made no other answer to their questions than that he could not explain how the papers came to be in his house, and when they told him that Darby O'Roone had brought a warrant to arrest him, and would produce it if he refused to give the information required, he said he was ready to go with the officers of justice wherever they chose to take him. Oh, Lesbia, it was a terrible hour for me, for I had the clue the officers wanted, and I could have told them what would have cleared Pelham at once, and I did not know whether I ought to speak or be silent. I think I should have spoken if Pelham had not put out his hand in his quiet way and taken mine and held it all the time the discussion went on. Then when the voices grew loud mamma heard, and rushed in and clung to Pelham and implored him not to go—not to let himself be parted from her. It was very hard for him. He carried mamma back into her room and stayed there alone

with her for a few minutes. I don't know what he said to her, but it satisfied her that he was right to go, and quieted her for the time. I was left here with the men, and the English sergeant came up to me while Pelham was away and put his hand on my shoulder, and said kindly he was sure that was a good son and brother who had just left the room, and would I let him be carried to prison if I could help it? It would not be a good place to be in while the insurrection they talked of was going on, and once in prison on charge of aiding the rebels, it would not be easy to get out till all was quiet again, and who could say to-night when that might be? Lesbia, do you think I was wrong to hold my hands over my lips to keep myself from speaking, and so let the minutes pass that might have changed all?"

"You were obeying him," said Lesbia. "I don't think I could have done it; but I believe I should have known I ought to obey."

"It was not from obedience," Ellen said; "I thought of Connor. Pelham had told me a little time before that if he was arrested on that charge and convicted—and those very papers would have convicted him—he would be——"

"Yes, I know, John said the same," cried Lesbia, shuddering; "but if the papers are so dangerous, and

Pelham will never give up the author of them, will not the whole of the danger come on him?"

"But Connor may escape from the country; and since Pelham is innocent he will stand a better chance on his trial than Connor could. I was able to think of all that, for the time seemed very long while Pelham was away in the inner room with mamma, and while the kind-looking sergeant stood by my chair pleading with me. Darby O'Roone grew impatient at last, and began to swear at the delay, and then Pelham came back and said he was ready to start. The wretch Darby reminded the policemen that they had brought handcuffs, and that they had before them a long, dark ride to Ballyowen, through a country where a very little effort on the part of Pelham's friends would make it easy for him to escape; but the English sergeant gave Darby a look of contempt that ought to have made him wither up into the reptile he is at heart, and said he would trust the gentleman, and then he went with Pelham himself to the stable to saddle Pelham's horse. I hastily packed up a few necessaries in a travelling bag and ran outside and gave it to him just as he was riding away. He told me to take care of myself, and of mamma, and to trust for help to Mr. Thornley, and then he began to say something about you, but O'Roone came up and cut short our farewell. I watched them to the turn of

the road. The policemen had lanterns, and I could see them moving on and on to the very end. I almost forgot (I am so used to watching Pelham to that point) that it would do mamma no good to know he was safe so far on such a journey as this one. Poor mamma! Pelham's words had acted like a spell on her, compelling her to be quiet; he has such influence over her; but I don't think she realised that he was really going away till I came back alone. I felt very powerless to comfort her. It was a terrible night, much like in painfulness to another I have to look back upon in my life. I felt very wicked while it lasted, as if God had deserted us and let everyone be against us; but better thoughts came with the light, and now you have come bringing the love that shames me for my hard thoughts, and ought to teach me never to lose faith again. Did your brother know you were coming to us?"

"Know? why of course he did. He has gone to Ballyowen to remonstrate with the magistrates, and you may be sure, Ellen, he will never rest till he has done all that is possible. He said he might have to go to Dublin to get permission to communicate with Pelham and secure his being fairly treated."

"This will surely comfort mamma. I hear her stirring now. Go in to her, Lesbia. She shall see your bright

face when she opens her eyes, and hear your good news before desponding thoughts have time to come back."

"And while I talk to her, had you not better prepare everything for leaving this house as soon as she is dressed? The thought of being on the way to him will best help her to bear up, I know. John said I was to bring you both back to Castle Daly for the night, and to-morrow she and I will go on to Galway, and when we come back——"

You think you shall bring him with you?"

"I will never go back to Castle Daly unless he is free to go there too if he likes. Ellen, it is not my house any more. I don't feel as if I had anything now but the one thing—that is everything to me. I am going to tell your mother that she is to come to-night to her own house. You will feel that it is hers, and yours, and his—not mine—won't you? or I shall never believe you love me."

CHAPTER IX.

"You're my friend—
What a thing friendship is, world without end!"
THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS.

FOUR days had passed since Lesbia's drive to Eagle's Edge and Ellen was again at the Hollow watching by Anne O'Flaherty's sick-bed. There had been a change for the worse in the invalid's state, and it was now only at rare intervals that she could bear conversation or notice those around her. Ellen's time was divided between ministering to her wants and sitting silent beside her, gazing at the dear face that was beginning to take the appearance of an empty shell, from which the animating spirit was gradually being withdrawn. She had hardly any news of those she was anxious about. Castle Daly and Eagle's Edge were both deserted. Mr. Thornley was in Dublin, and Lesbia and Mrs. Daly were staying at an hotel in Galway, seeing nothing of Pelham, and unable to get tidings of him,

but preferring to wait Mr. Thornley's return in his neighbourhood than elsewhere. Murdock Malachy had mysteriously disappeared from the Hollow since Ellen's last visit, and the household's supply of letters and newspapers depended on Peter Lynch's consenting to abandon for an hour or so his favourite seat on the horse-block in the stable-yard, and going to fetch them from Ballyowen. It was difficult in these days to persuade him to stir from his self-chosen post, where, as he said, he was ready to take orders, when the turn of the illness came and his mistress sent for him. He had not seen Miss O'Flaherty for a fortnight, he pleaded, when Ellen came from the sick-room to argue the point with him, and there would be a power of things for him to tell her and consult her about when the strength came back to her all on a suddint, and she asked for him. It would never do for him to be out of the way and disappoint her just when she wanted him again. Anxious as she was for letters, Ellen had not the heart during these last days of watching to send Peter away, even for a few hours, seeing as she did how the old obstinate determination to believe only what he chose was passing out of his set wooden face, leaving it wan and weak, with an imploring, frightened look in the eyes, such as a child turns towards a dark room it fears to be forced to enter. He might be wanted on a sudden soon, though

not for the cause he expected, and Ellen thought he had as much right as any one to wait about on the chance of one more word. Dr. Lynch, too, had absented himself, without sending any explanation of his absence. There seemed no avenue by which tidings could come, any more than if the little rivulet that surrounded the house, whose bubblings and ripplings were the chief disturbers of the unusual silence, had suddenly swelled into a wide ocean, cutting the household off from the rest of the world. Yet, as the days crept by, a vague apprehension of what was going on outside did ooze into the valley, and reached even as far as the watchers by Anne's dying-bed. There were whispers repeated from one to another, and faces that had hitherto only worn an expression of anxiety or expectation began to look dark. At last one day one of the little maidens appeared in Anne's room with a face swollen with crying, and on inquiry it came out that she had been to chapel in a distant village, and some one had told her that Murdock Malachy had been shot in a fight there had been down in the south. That was all Ellen heard for twenty-four anxious hours. Then all at once everybody was talking; even Peter Lynch's tongue was loosed, and men and women came up to the Lodge from the valley, and from the solitary farms among the hills, to tell the news, of which the air was full, and question Miss

Eileen, as if she could explain tidings that seemed to have stunned them. It was all over: Smith O'Brien was taken prisoner, and there had been no fighting at all, only a tumult in which one or two of the boys had been shot, and the rest had run away, leaving the leaders to take care of themselves.

"To be sure," Ellen's informants generally concluded, "the priests were agin it this time, and how would it prosper? The cause was lost anyhow, and the police and Mr. O'Roone would have it all their own way in the counthry, and what would they do at all? Could Miss Eileen tell them, when Miss O'Flaherty was dead, and Mr. Connor, and every one that hoped for better times put out of the way?"

From these whispered conferences Ellen tried to gather at least the consoling certainty that there had been little bloodshed, and she returned to her post by the sick-bed to watch for an interval of consciousness, when she might fulfil her promise of letting Anne know all to the last. *She* would be able to rejoice heartily in this determination to all her fears, and would not share the blank surprise and shame that troubled Ellen when she compared the high expectations and purposes of which she had been told with this *denouement*, and thought, with bitter grudging, of the young lives that had wrecked themselves

in the mists of so miserable a delusion. On the evening of the fifth day Dr. Lynch came into Anne's room and proceeded to ask after her health and talk to her nurses as if there had been no break in his visits. Anne opened her eyes at the sound of his voice, and a look of intelligence and inquiry came back into her face.

"Have you anything to tell me?" she asked feebly.

"Nothing at all," he answered in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone, "but that there is a better end to all their folly than might have been expected; and those for whom you care most are in no worse predicament than they were a week ago."

Anne looked satisfied; but when his business in the sick-room was ended, Dr. Lynch beckoned Ellen to follow him out of the room, and a dread seized her that there was worse to hear than he had dared to tell his patient.

"Was it truth you told her? Do you know really nothing worse of Connor than you did last week?" she asked as soon as they were out of hearing.

"Would I have told her a lie do you think, when we won't have her many more hours with us? Don't frighten yourself, Miss Ellen, I have nothing worse for you than you know already, but as I chanced to be in it all the time, I thought you'd like to hear the little there is to be said."

"Indeed I should!"

"Come into the turret room, then."

"Do you mean that you have been to Tipperary with Smith O'Brien and the insurrectionists?" Ellen began. "I thought you disapproved—"

"Of course I did not go with a pike over my shoulder. I have not lived in the world sixty years, and travelled twice round it, to make a fool of myself in my old age; but there were people looking on who kept clear of the fighting, such as it was, and I was one of them; though, as you may suppose, I did not leave my duty here for the purpose of seeing a party of my countrymen make a pitiful spectacle of themselves before all Europe."

"But why then were you there?"

"It was a thought took me, a notion that came into my mind when I saw your mother the morning after Pelham was arrested. I was always one for laying schemes to outwit people for their good. And as I rode away from Eagle's Edge, heartsore that day at the sight of the trouble you were in, a plot suggested itself to me that beat everything for ingenuity, I thought. 'Why should not one brother's danger be made the means of saving the other from worse ill than he has brought himself into already,' I said to myself. And I resolved to follow Connor, and if possible get speech of him before he had come up with

the fighting, which that morning's lying newspaper said was going on fiercely in the South. If I can keep him from being actually seen with arms in his hands, I may save his neck, I thought; and I planned to put it to him that his brother was in danger, and his mother breaking her heart on his account, and that he was bound to come back without delay and deliver himself up as the writer of the papers that had inculpated Pelham. Knowing the generous temper of the lad I had to deal with, I had good hope I should have him safe in my own keeping before twenty-four hours were over, and then I thought we would settle on the next step to be taken at our leisure. That was on the Thursday morning; and strive as I would, I could not get off from Ballyowen till evening, for of course, when I got back, my house was surrounded with people wanting me, and I had to make arrangements for bad cases before I set out. I reached Tipperary on Friday morning, and all Friday I was driving about from place to place, hearing always that there was a crowd of people with arms in front of me; some said two thousand men, some three, some a few hundred; and that the club leaders from Dublin were among them, haranguing them every now and then, and trying to spirit them up to think themselves an army. At one place I heard they had stopped a regiment of soldiers on their

march, but let them pass after all; and then again there was a story of their having seized a quantity of arms, but that did not turn out to be true. I passed Friday night at a little inn in Ballingarry, and in the morning set forth again with a fresh car and horse, and about the middle of the day sure enough I came up with what I was looking for, but too late to do any good. When I was about a quarter of a mile off I saw a crowd surrounding a tall white house on a common, and though it was a cloudy, drizzling day I once caught a chance gleam of reflected sunshine that told me they were carrying steel among them—pikes and scythes and pitchforks, and here and there a few bayonets! It was all confusion and din when I got nearer, but I left my car on the outskirts of the throng and pushed my way into the thick of it, thinking that if any fighting did come off here, there might be something for me to do by and by. The windows of the white house were full of green-coats, and the crowds with pikes appeared to be besieging the house, trying to make them come out and give up their arms, but nobody seemed to know exactly what was intended, and neither party liked to fire first. I noticed a tall man, who was pointed out to me as Mr. Smith O'Brien, come again and again to the windows of the house and then turn and speak to the people, but whether he urged them to attack or keep the

peace, I could not say. There were several other young fellows better dressed than the rest trying to put some order into the crowd, and among them I soon espied the two I was in search of. They were well in front, among the small innermost circle, who for the most part carried arms and had more purpose in their faces than the gaping ragged outsiders, and even if I could have forced my way to them and made them listen to me it would have been too late for what I wanted—they had done the worst for themselves they could do. While I stood watching, the first shot was fired, and a volley of stones hurled against the windows, and after that, for about half an hour or so, a brisk exchange of shot went on. I stayed long enough to see that our two were foremost in everything. There was an attempt made to set fire to the door of the house in order to smoke out the garrison and force them to surrender or fight outside. I saw Connor followed by one or two more run across the inclosed space behind the house and come back with arms full of hay and straw which they piled against the back door. Murdock Malachy was helping—that was the last I saw of the poor fellow unhurt. Some of the garrison within perceived what was being attempted, and fired a volley from the upper windows at the incendiaries. They scattered and came back to the attempt several times, and in the surging

backwards and forwards of the crowd, I got shoved aside, and thinking it as well to give a wide berth to the shots that were just then flying pretty thickly close to the house, I retreated among the rabble of women who had gathered outside the low garden wall, and who were wringing their hands and hullabalooing, calling to the boys they knew in the fight to come away and not make their homes more desolate than they were already. While I was there I heard my name called, 'Dr. Lynch, can that be you?' and turning round I saw O'Donnell staggering up to the wall, through the throng, with some one in his arms. 'Yes,' I said, 'it's me,' and I had my heart in my mouth, for I could only see a figure lying across his breast, with an arm over his shoulder, and I thought of Connor at once. 'Then it's a lucky chance that brought you,' O'Donnell answered. 'Here's work for you, the first of the boys that's down yet, the poor lad Malachy, he's breathing still, help me with him over the wall, that he may not be trampled to death in the throng here. He has a bullet in him, I am afraid. It was aimed full at Connor as he stooped to put a light to the little bonfire we had piled up yonder, and if poor Murdock had not started forward at the moment, and thrust his shoulder in the way, it's Connor who would have got it. I think myself he knew what he was about, poor boy, and did it on

purpose; anyhow tell them about it at home, and do what you can for him. I must go back.' There were plenty of hands put out to lift the body over the wall, and help me to carry it to the next field out of the way of the tumult, and some of the women ran to a cabin a little way off to fetch water; but I soon saw there was nothing to be done!"

"Poor Murdock! was he dead?"

"The bullet had entered just between the shoulder-blades and come out at the throat. It could be only a question of a few minutes, and I did not think he would ever speak again: but he did. As we were bathing his forehead and putting some whisky to his lips there was a minute's consciousness, and he looked full at me. 'Mr. Connor,' he said.

"'Yes, my poor fellow,' I answered. 'He's all right; you saved him, I believe, and got this instead of him.'

"'He was always good to me,' he answered, 'and maybe some day I'll see him and Miss Eileen agin in a better place than Ireland will ever be, when all's done.'

"There was no more talking after that, for the blood rose in his throat and choked him, and I had to lay him down from my arms on the ditch side, for some one called me just then to help a poor fellow who had been pushed out of the crowd with a broken arm."

"But Connor—did you see nothing more of Connor or of D'Arcy? How do you know they were not killed or wounded after poor Murdock left them?"

"By having seen pretty nearly all who were hurt. There was only one other boy killed besides Murdock, and I saw him lying stark among the cabbages when all was over—a tall, lank, famine-stricken shape that would have died of another day's tramp, if a bullet had not found him out and saved him the trouble of going further. There was a withered hag, though, and a couple of skeleton children to hullabaloo over him. To think of clever lads like Connor and D'Arcy, to say nothing of a sober gentleman of forty like Mr. Smith O'Brien, proposing to stand up against England with an army composed of material like that."

"But how did it end? Did they go on fighting?"

"For twenty minutes or so longer there was an exchange of shots, and then they began to come all from one side. The crowd of insurgents was melting away gradually. About the middle of the afternoon a reinforcement of police marched up the road fronting the house, and at sight of them the remnant of the people scattered, leaving their leaders almost alone. There were no prisoners taken, however,—that I saw. The police entered the house to join their comrades, and the late attackers

were allowed to ride off in parties of twenties and tens across the common. For a little while the place was quiet again, except for the ragged women and children that hung about—crooning over the two dead bodies. I went back to where poor Murdock lay, and had his body removed to a cabin near before dark."

"And you don't really know any more of Connor?"

"No; to follow him, or inquire about him would have been to draw attention to him. We know that the leaders separated before night. O'Brien was arrested on his way to Limerick, but the others, less conspicuous, seem to have reached their destinations, and we will hope by this time are over the sea. D'Arcy O'Donnell has friends in Galway, and I think he told me once a foster-brother among the Claddagh fishers. He could not have a safer hiding-place than among them, or one from which he could more conveniently get off to America."

"When shall we know?"

"When we get a letter from the other side of the sea to say they are safe in New York. Don't wish to hear of them sooner; they are in a very different position now from what I believed them to be in when I thought of bringing Connor back. After their conduct that miserable day on the common at Boughlah, we should have to fear the very worst for them if they were taken. Let us pray as

the best hope we have that we may not see their faces again, poor boys, for years.

"And Pelham?"

"It certainly won't tell in his favour that his brother has made himself so conspicuous as a rebel; but once we are assured that Connor is safe in America, Pelham's defence will be comparatively easy. Nothing can be brought against him but the possession of those papers, and we shall have no scruples about bringing people to show their true authorship then."

"Yet I believe if Connor knew this minute where Pelham was, he would come back."

"It would be like his rashness; but I trust he will not know; wherever he is now he won't be likely to put himself forward to inquire for news. I hope he has money enough to get across."

"Poor, poor Murdock Malachy! I am not thinking as much as I ought of his devotion to Connor. How it would touch Anne if we could tell her. Does it not seem strange that if only two were to fall in the attempt she has been dreading for so many months, one should come from her people?"

"I made the best arrangements I could for a decent burial for him, knowing she would wish it. A strange thought came into my mind as I stood looking at his

body, after it was laid out. I thought of the old custom of killing the favourite servants over a chieftain's grave, that he might have people to wait on him, to his mind, in the other world; and I could not help a sort of satisfaction coming over me as I said to myself,—at all events there'll be one of hers waiting for her when she gets over the river. It would be comfortable for the two of them, if it was permitted to them to fall into anything like their old relationship to each other up there, and Murdock would not have to serve alone for long. My poor cousin Peter will soon follow him. I don't believe he'll be long for this world when once he lets himself believe that his mistress is really dying. I'll go and have a word with him now."

The strange thought came back into Ellen's mind in the evening, as she stood in the bay window of Anne's favourite turret room, delaying to shut out the light of the harvest moon, that had grown now to a shapely silver boat, whose reflection made a faint glimmer in the river. The house within was very still and empty. Its owner, to whom in past times all the life and enjoyment in it had been due, was now lying upstairs helpless and unconscious: the body at least helpless—the spirit ebbing slowly away from its old abiding place: to what conditions? Would any of the old links re-form themselves?

Would Murdock and the many poor neighbours who had gone from Anne's valley in the famine years—people whom she had protected and governed—would they be able to meet her with thanks and greetings in the fresh existence? Would she still look to them like a queen worthy of their allegiance? Perhaps those old sacrifices of which Dr. Lynch had reminded her were not prompted by savagery and selfish pride alone; there might have been true love in them—a sort of necessity even, in the days when service was not altogether an arbitrary thing, but was, sometimes, at least, the complete loyal giving up of the lower, weaker natures to the stronger and higher natures, who ruled them and gave their lives shape and meaning.

As these thoughts crowded in Ellen's mind, her eye wandered over the landscape almost without seeing anything, and then suddenly perception of what was before her came back with a start, and a thrill went through her as she remembered that, for about a minute, she had been watching the approach of a man's figure to the head of the bridge, and now perceived that he was moving along with the limping gait that had always distinguished Murdock Malachy. She did not scream, but she sat down breathless on the window-sill. The faint light made everything shadowy and ghost-like. It might be

her imagination, occupied with thoughts of Murdock, that created the image, yet it came steadily on and grew more solid-looking at every step. In the shadow of the house it became a black, undistinguishable form; but it drew close to the window, leaned its arms on the sill, and said in a low voice, that Ellen recognised at once:

"Anne, is that you? Will you take me in, as you did once before, when I ran away and surprised you here at the window?"

"Connor! dear, dear Connor! it is not Anne; it is I, Ellen. How could you come back here, to put yourself in danger of being seen by O'Roone?"

"Go round to the door and let me in, and I'll tell you all about it. I'm too tired and faint and dead-beat altogether to jump through the window now."

"And hurt; are you hurt?—you walk lame."

"Only footsore: and, at all events, before morning comes, and I present myself to old O'Roone to save him the pleasure of sending for me, we'll have had our talk out and I'll have seen Anne again, and supped off a Happy-go-lucky fish-pie once more."

"Where's D'Arcy?" Ellen asked, as soon as she had brought Connor in, and shut the door of the room behind him.

"In Galway to-night; but before forty-eight hours are

over, he'll be on the sea on his way to America I hope."

"And oh, Connor! why are not you with him? How could you come back here to break all our hearts with fear for you?"

"You ask me that, and you know where Pelham is now; and Ellen, you know, too, as well as I do, that m mother had rather a thousand times that I came to grief altogether than that his little finger ached. Do you think I could live free out there, and let him be ruined on my account, and she perhaps cursing me for what I had brought on him? I have made a mess of my life altogether, and may as well come to an end and let luckier people have their chance."

"Connor, you are unjust to mamma and forget all the rest of us, when you speak like that."

"Well, well, don't let us argue about it. I've made up my mind, and I'm too done-up for an argument now. Let me sit down, and give me something to eat and drink. I would not like to come before old O'Roone to-morrow looking too much like a victim, for all that's come and gone; one may as well die one way as another if one puts a bold face on it to the last; and anyhow I'll give myself up of my own good will. I won't be taken or betrayed, as has chanced to better men than me this year."

"No one would betray you here," Ellen said, eagerly catching at the word. "We might easily hide you for a week or so in Good People's Hollow, till we see what happens. You need be in no hurry to give yourself up."

"But I am in a hurry, Eileen aroon. Don't argue with me; I told you I was dead-beat, dear; and it's a comfort to see some plain thing to do when all one has looked forward to and believed in has crumbled to pieces under one's feet, and one hardly knows where one is standing."

"How did you hear about Pelham?"

"A Galway boy, who had seen Pelham taken to prison, came to the place where D'Arcy and I were hiding, and told me all; and another fellow brought me word this morning that he had just seen our mother and Lesbia standing among the miserable crowd round the prison doors trying to get in, and that they were sent away weeping, the two of them. That was enough. I talked it over with D'Arcy, and though we were sorry to part, he said I was right, and acknowledged that he should be glad enough to have such an excuse for giving it all up and making an end. He would have gone with me to the authorities in Galway if I'd have let him; but I persuaded him to stay and take his chance, and I had set my heart on another look at the Hollow, and a night of chat with you, Eileen aroon, and on the satisfaction of seeing with

my own eyes the look of baffled spite that will come on the faces of the two O'Roones when I show them that they will have to loose their hold on Pelham; so I came here. To sit in this window-seat again was well worth the walk, and I mean to enjoy the fish-pie when you get it me, I can tell you. Only don't argue with me, avourneen; I'm not in the humour for that."

The playful, coaxing smile that lighted up Connor's pale face at the last words was too much for Ellen; she hurried from the room to fetch the refreshments that she saw were so much needed, and as she hastily got them together, racked her brain to think of some expedient for detaining Connor till Dr. Lynch or John Thornley could see him and try to dissuade him from his purpose. She debated within herself whether to call up one of the servants and despatch a summons to Dr. Lynch to come to-night; but she decided it would be too great a risk. Ballyowen was full of strange policemen and soldiers, and a large reward had been offered for Connor's arrest, and some one even of their own people might be found base enough to think it a pity that so large a sum should be lost by a voluntary surrender. Ellen knew Connor well enough to be convinced that it would be a great additional pang to him to be balked of his self-surrender, and she thought it better to trust to her own persuasions than risk

inflicting such a wound as betrayal at the last would be. She had had previous experience of Connor in moods of deep despondency following on great excitement, and she could not help hoping that, after refreshment and rest, she should find him more persuadable. As the evening passed on, however, and the conversation between them was prolonged, she was obliged to acknowledge to herself that for once his resolution was too firmly rooted for any words of hers to shake it. He had been wholly unprepared for the events of the last few days, and the downfall to his expectations had been so great a shock as to make him loose his hold on hope, and turn from the future with loathing. There was keen remorse, too, for the share he had had in deluding Murdock and the young men of the neighbourhood who were now in prison with Pelham. They spoke long of Murdock, and Connor was deeply touched when Ellen repeated his last words.

"He would not have blamed me or lost faith in me, poor fellow, even if he had lived to see what a failure it was. I don't believe that any of them will, even if they are sent with common felons across the sea and never see Ireland again; but I begin to see it is a terrible thing we have done. We made a world for ourselves of our own hopes and dreams, and brought them to act in it."

"Then don't you think," said Ellen eagerly, "that you

are bound to live to undo the harm you have done? Does not Murdock's death, that bought your life, bind you to some service for Ireland before you die? We don't see yet what it is to be, or how it could be rendered, but the call may come."

"But death may serve as well as life. Patriots' blood is just as much the seed of nationality as martyrs' of the Church. D'Arcy has always said that the power of standing by each other in misfortune is what we want above all, and if I give an example of *that* to the death, I shall have done something. You may call it laziness if you like, but it's just all I've strength left for. And talking of laziness, dear, this sofa is very comfortable; I think I'll just lie down and go to sleep, and you may come and call me in the morning. I daresay I'll sleep till the sun's well up, for it's long since I've had a quiet night, or such a bed as this to sleep on; and as I said before, I don't want to look like a victim when I give myself up. My plan is to ride to old O'Roone's door just when the family are sitting down to breakfast, and to walk into the breakfast-room with a flower in my button-hole, and a gay 'good morning' and hand-shake to all the ladies round, as free and easy as if I had come to take Darby out fishing or shooting with me, as I used to do in the days when the little sneak was glad enough and proud enough to go wherever I

whistled him. Then I shall put my hand on Darby's shoulder. 'I've brought you a present of 200*l.* of blood money this morning,' I'll say. 'Who's fitter to have it than your father's son, since it's the last fraction of money that's to be squeezed out of the Dalys, and your father has had such a large share of what's gone before? It's a drop in the ocean, to be sure, compared with Miss Maynard's fortune, but since you'll have to leave that to Pelham now, you may as well make what you can of me.' Won't he be savage! The story'll stick to him for the rest of his life."

"Oh, Connor, how can you take pleasure in planning such things, when you know the serious part that must follow?"

"Surely you don't grudge me any pleasure there is to be got out of it? We've had the serious part over and over half the night, and it has made you as pale as a sheet, my poor darling. Go to bed, mavourneen, and wake me just in time not to miss the breakfast scene. Mrs. O'Roone and the young ladies never come down till ten o'clock, and then in their curl papers. Don't I know the ways of the place, and the shocked looks they'll put on at my coming in, rebel as I am, and seeing them in *deshabille?* Sleep all you can."

Connor was still fast asleep on the sofa when Ellen

stole into the turret room early the next morning, and, to prevent any of the servants coming into the room, began to busy herself in preparing the breakfast. She set Anne's little tea table with her favourite breakfast service, and opening the casement, let in the fresh morning air, and still Connor did not open his eyes. He looked more like himself this morning, now he had eaten and slept. His face was thinner than it had been a few days before, but the colour was coming back into it, and there was more life there even with his eyes closed, and the long lashes resting on his cheeks, than there had been yesterday evening. It was impossible to connect that young fair, pleasant face with the thought of a shameful death. "To be hanged by the neck till he was dead!" Oh, Connor, Connor, who had always been the mirth of the house, whose gay voice and smile had warmed every heart in the country round! Surely Ellen thought there could not be found a judge in all Ireland with the heart to pronounce sentence on him.

Ellen stood for a long time looking at him, turning every now and then to wipe away the tears that obscured the vision and marred its beauty. Even if the very worst were averted, she knew there was nothing but long separation to look forward to. The best they could pray for, as Dr. Lynch had said, was that they might not see the boys' bright faces

again for years, not until middle age had set its seal upon them, and the brightness was gone.

Every half-hour of inaction seemed a gain, so she allowed the moments to slip by unnoticed as she took her fill of looking. At last a clock striking eight roused her.

"I will humour him in everything he wished this last morning," she said to herself, "whatever comes of it. I'll go out into the garden and gather the flower he talked about for his button-hole, and then I'll wake him, and tell him we have only two hours more."

The garden was not in its usual trim since Peter Lynch had lost heart to work in it, but there was a blue and white passion flower in full bloom on the trellis by Anne's bedroom window, and Ellen went round the house to gather a blossom, thinking she would rather have that than anything else for her purpose. As she returned to the front door, which she had left open, she saw a man approaching the steps, and with beating heart she quickened her pace to intercept him before he could enter the house. It was James Morris, and at sight of her he turned back to meet her, and put a letter in her hand.

"It came to Castle Daly last night from Mr. Thornley, with orders to me to let you have it at once, wherever you might be."

"Wait here in the garden, please, James," Ellen said, "I will come out to you by and by."

For the first moment the letter did not seem to promise much interest; it could not affect the overwhelming trouble of this morning; but when she again stood by Connor's couch, a thought struck her which made her sink on her knees and feel she could only open it so. The note contained a few lines only, whose purport her eye took in at a glance:—

"In case you should not be with Lesbia when my full account reaches her, I send this note to be forwarded on to you. All is well. Pelham will be at liberty within a few hours of your reading this. I have seen the Lord Lieutenant, and have in my possession an order signed for his release. I went armed with proofs of O'Roone's misconduct and misapplication of public money during the famine that were considered enough to discredit his actions in other matters. I shall be in Galway a few hours after my letter, and will bring Pelham back with me to Castle Daly.

"Always yours,

"J. THORNLEY."

The revulsion of feeling was almost too much. Ellen let the letter fall on the ground, and dropped her face between her hands, as her whole soul went up to Heaven in an in-

tense thanksgiving. Connor stirred on the sofa before she had finished her prayer, and when she looked up he was awake, and had raised himself on one elbow, and was looking towards the open window. She waited in silence for a few minutes to watch him, as she might have watched one restored from the dead. A pathetic look stole into his face, as he gazed out at the fair scene bathed in sunshine.

"By Jove," he said, slowly turning to her at last. "How beautiful everything is this morning. I did not know before the half of how beautiful it all was. Well, I'm glad it's a fine day for my last ride. I could not have had a better last look at the country, could I? The next time the sun rises I won't see it. I'll be in prison, but Pelham will be free, and my mother satisfied with me. There was something my father said when he was dying about being satisfied. What was it, Ellen?"

"Connor, Connor, listen, avourneen, listen, and let's go down on our knees and bless God together. Pelham *will* be free by to-morrow morning; but there's no need for you to put yourself in his place. Read what has come for you at your waking, darling."

Connor took the letter which Ellen picked up from the ground and read it slowly twice over without speaking, his changeful face showing the strong emotions that stirred him as he read. Ellen threw her arms round him as he

finished his second perusal, and for a few minutes they kissed and clung together in their old, childish fashion of celebrating meetings or reconciliations; with half articulate words of love and joy, and thankfulness whispered to each other, and with tears wetting the two faces, that would not, they knew through all their joy, often touch again.

"I'll tell you just what it all comes to, Eileen aroon," Connor said at last, raising his head from her shoulder, and smiling through the tears he was trying to wink away. "I'll tell you just what it means. You'll have to marry him, for he has saved my neck to-day: saved me from hanging, and I don't see how you are to have the heart to refuse him what he's worked so hard for. It is that—that and nothing else, I schemed to bring about, one day, long ago, when poor Murdock broke his thigh, and James Morris and I spirited away Pelham's dog to Dennis's old still. That was the fate that hung on our doings little as we knew it. The Thornleys coming to Ireland, your marrying an Englishman, and Pelham's getting an English heiress for his wife. Ah, yes, and it was the end of the reign of the Dalys in Connemara we brought about, too, for Pelham will have to take her name, and he will rechristen the castle, you may depend. It's the way things go with us. Whatever is worth anything in the old country, the English get hold of. I think you are about

the best thing in the green isle, avourneen, and an Englishman will get you, after all, and I can't quarrel with the way in which he's won you. If all the conquests over us were made in the same fashion we would have to hold our tongue, and not complain whatever we lost."

"But you don't know about that one conquest yet," said Ellen, blushing crimson, as she turned her eyes away from the keen question in his. "You don't know what I'll do yet; perhaps hold myself ready to follow you to America, with all cousin Anne's people, when you send us word you have got a new Good People's Hollow ready for us on the other side of the sea."

"Ay, and when D'Arcy has made a place and a name for himself out there that will make people turn round to look after his cousin."

"It does me good to hear you say that, Con, dear. Life and hope are coming back to you, now you begin to weave schemes again for him. But what you said of James Morris just now reminds me that he is waiting outside the door all this time, and that I had better go and send him away."

"No; bring him in. James Morris out there! How lucky. He's the very boy I'd have sent for from all the others in the world, to help me to get back to Galway before the ship that's to take D'Arcy to America sails. I

could not manage the walk a second time, to say nothing of the chance of being arrested on the way. But James is the boy with the quick wit to help us to see what's to be done."

Ellen ran to call James in, and Connor met him at the door of the turret room with outstretched hands, somewhat to the embarrassment of the smart young footman in Miss Maynard's correct livery, who had undergone four years of Bride Thornley's training in man-servant's manners.

"What! are you above shaking hands with a rebel?" Connor exclaimed. "It's for the last time, my lad. There, that's right; I thought you weren't Thornleyized to such a point as to forget your old master's ways, who comes this morning to put his life between your two hands. Do you remember the evening, Jim, when we contrived together, you and I, and stole a dog from its owner? and will you be able to manage as cleverly, do you think, to steal a rebel from those who are hunting him to prison and death? He is worth two hundred pounds, you must know, to any one who pleases to sell him."

"I'd not like to see the boy who was willing to earn *that* money, Mr. Connor," said James in a low tone of strong feeling, and trembling with emotion as he clasped Connor's hands. "I'd not like to think of the kind of life he would lead here who had your blood-money on his

head. It would not be a long one, sir, any way; I'd see to that myself."

"Hush! hush! Jim," cried Ellen; don't let us speak of such a terrible thing as Connor being taken. What we have to do is to give our best thoughts to the question of how to get him safely away. No one knows of his being here, as yet, but myself and you. Shut the door and let us consult together." The result of the conference was a resolution that the secret of Connor's visit to the Hollow should be kept between the three to whom it was now known, and that Connor should pass the day in a light closet within Anne's bedroom, from which all intruders could be excluded without suspicion being excited. In the evening James proposed to return with a suit of his own clothes for Connor, who was to put them on, and walk with him across the hills to the boat-house on the river, where one of Miss Maynard's pleasure boats was kept. There Ellen, who was to set out some hours earlier, and take a different route, was to meet them. Miss Maynard's livery was well known in the neighbourhood, and they thought that the most vigilant constable they were likely to come across would not trouble himself to look curiously at two of Miss Maynard's servants, amusing themselves by an evening stroll or by an hour's fishing on the river. Once in the boat they could glide gradually down the river

till they reached the head of the lake, then through the narrow channel past Castle Daly out into the wide waters of Lough Corrib, where they could put on greater speed, and might hope to enter Galway harbour through Friar's Cut, early in the morning and reach the emigrant ship before she sailed with the morning tide. If Connor could reach her all would be well, for the captain was a friend D'Arcy, and had agreed to receive the two friends on board. The conference broke up hastily at the sound of Peter Lynch's voice in the garden. Ellen thought it better not to let him know what had happened, as he was sure to take objection against any plan that originated with James Morris, and could not now be trusted not to betray his thoughts by mutterings and moanings to every one who came near him. To avoid arousing his curiosity she hastily dismissed James and took Connor upstairs to his hiding place within Anne's room, where he was to await the hour of sunset. The day, Connor's last day in Ireland, fraught with danger and suspense as every hour of it was, seemed both to him and Ellen to pass with painful rapidity. The greater part of it Connor spent by Anne's bedside, seated on a chair near her, and holding her hand in his. She did not seem at all surprised to see him. Whenever she woke up from a doze, and her eyes fell on him, a smile of pleasure played round her lips; but when she exerted

herself to talk her thoughts wandered to past times, and she seemed sometimes to mistake Connor for his father, and recur to recollections of childish days, and sometimes to confuse the circumstances of this visit with those of the time when he had come to the Hollow just before the first break-up of the household at Castle Daly. Yet, through all her unconnected fancies there ran predominant the thought of a journey awaiting both herself and Connor.

"We are leaving the valley together," she said once or twice, "stepping westward."

And once, when her lips went on moving for some time, Ellen stooped down and caught a verse of a poem of Wordsworth — a special favourite of Anne, which they had often read together—

> "The dewy ground was dark and cold
> Behind, all dreary to behold,
> And stepping westward seemed to be,
> A kind of Heavenly Destiny."

"It is her blessing and prophecy of good to you, Connor, dear," she said, repeating the words to him with a sob in her voice and a smile. "She is past feeling the pain of parting, but she gives you that word of hope to take with you."

"Yes," Anne said in a firmer voice, "past everything

but hope—within sight of where all is swallowed up in love."

Dr. Lynch came close upon the hour when Ellen was to set out on her walk to the river; and, after feeling Anne's pulse, he drew Ellen aside to tell her that his patient would hardly live through the night, and that the priest from the next village should be sent for at once. A hasty explanation of Connor's presence in the house and of the plan for his escape followed, and Dr. Lynch decided that they must take leave of Anne and quit the house before the priest and his attendant entered it. He would stay, he said, to the last. To leave her at such a moment was very bitter to Ellen. She and Connor went and knelt together by the bedside, and Anne, whose faculties had been aroused by the stir and bustle in the room, put her hands on their heads and blessed them.

"You must not weep and break my heart," she said, smiling. "You know the last good-bye must have come. This is but a few moments earlier."

"But oh! to leave you to die alone, with none of your own near you—that is the heart-break," sobbed Ellen.

"My dear, I shall not be alone," Anne whispered; "I shall be less alone than I have ever been in my life before. I have been lonely sometimes with all my own about me;

but now, never again. The Friend is near who alone can walk with me through the Dark Valley."

Ellen choked back her tears, not to disturb the supreme peace that was settling on the beloved face she should not see again till it was stiff in death, and rising, pressed a long, farewell kiss on the pale lips, and turning away, left the room without venturing to look again. Connor followed immediately, and Ellen took him into the least frequented of the turret rooms to await James Morris's appearance with his disguise, while she herself set out on her walk across the hills. They were to take the shortest and she the longest route to the river; for it was important that neither party should arrive at their destination long before the other, for fear of attracting observation while waiting about. For a few miles Ellen walked on mechanically, hardly able to keep her eyes free enough from blinding tears to see the path she was following, but by degrees the solemn beauty of the sunset on the hills began to exercise a soothing influence, and she grew calmer. The evening was perfectly calm; there would not be a ripple on the lake to hinder the rowers. On such an evening the boat voyage down Lough Corrib to Galway would be easily managed while the darkness lasted. If there had been a contrary wind it might have been impossible to make it in time to reach the vessel before she sailed. As yet all

looked well; the evening was closing in gently, the shadows crept further and further and grew darker in the valleys, and hardly a leaf stirred; the little lakes scattered between the hills reddened and whitened again, and lay glimmering coldly like still sheets of frosted silver; the sunset glow had faded everywhere but on the tops of the highest hills when Ellen reached the boat-house. She was the first to arrive, and had two hours of anxious waiting. Sometimes she paced the road near the river, unable to rest; and then, fearing to attract notice, she forced herself to sit still in the shadow of the boat-house. No one passed but a girl driving a cow to its pasture and a gossoon with the Castle Daly post-bag on his back whistling a gay tune as he ran. He had run just so last night, Ellen thought, with the news that was worth Connor's life behind him. But what did the delay mean? Could James Morris possibly have failed them? Could they have been stopped on the way? Just as the wonder began to grow into an agony of apprehension, the two figures her eyes had long been straining to see emerged out of the dark distance and rapidly approached her.

"All right," Connor's voice cried when they were a yard or two distant, and Ellen noticed that already his voice had its old alacrity and cheer in it. Then, as they came close, he whispered in her ear, "We waited at the Hollow till

nearly dark; for Morris has reason to think I was seen yesterday, and that the police are on the look-out to get hold of me; but the danger is nearly over now—once in the boat we'll do. I defy a stranger to get down the river and across the head of the lake in our time, and they'll not find any of the boys who know the currents ready to help them. I'd undertake myself to keep a boat within sight of Hen's Castle all night rowing hard."

Morris had gone into the boat-house and now brought out Lesbia's trim little pleasure-skiff, in which they all took their places, Ellen at the helm, and Connor and James each taking an oar. They hardly spoke a word till they had left the river far behind them, and were half way across the head of the lake, nearing the narrow channel that opened into the wider waters, where they could feel themselves comparatively safe.

The moon had risen, and was tipping with silver the ruined turrets of the Witch's Castle as they passed the island; another ten minutes' rowing brought them opposite Castle Daly. There were lights in the windows, and the outline of the old house stood clear and dark against the star-strewn sky. Connor made a sign to James, and balancing their oars, they kept the boat stationary for a few seconds while he looked up, and Ellen felt as if a great cry of pain must burst out from her heart involun-

tarily, so sharp a pang of sympathetic sorrow shot through it, as she thought of all the recollections and regrets that must crowd themselves into that silent farewell. In a minute Connor dropped his oar into the water, and the sharp, splashing sound that followed always had an accent of regret in it to Ellen's ears whenever she heard it afterwards. No remark was made till they had entered the channel and lost sight of the Castle lights, and then Connor stooped forward and whispered to Ellen:

"James says they were to come back this evening—my mother and Lesbia and Pelham. They are in there now—happy, I hope. Well, tell her I went away wearing her livery (touching his coat-sleeve), her slave to the last. I'm glad of it. She did not believe I loved her, nor did you either; but I did. It was not all such a joke with me as you chose to fancy. I may have made a fool of myself sometimes, but there was the true thing under all. I hope they'll be very happy. Tell her and my mother that I would have done what you know of, if John Thornley had not been beforehand with me."

When they had left the channel they struck out to some distance from the shore, and Ellen seemed to breathe more freely as the expanse of waters around them widened and widened out, making her feel shut in and sheltered between the brooding wings of night and the dividing waters. All

night long the dip of the oars and the ripple of the waves against the sides of the boat kept up a question and an answer that she seemed to be trying to understand. It was not always of Connor and the parting close at hand that they seemed to speak; it was oftenest of Anne, whose voyage through the night with the dark waters of death over her head and the "sheltering arms" underneath her bearing her on to eternal sunrise, was frequently so present to Ellen's mind as to shut out all recollection of her own position. Sometimes, however, James and Connor broke the oppressive monotony of sound by taking up a song—one of the old boating-songs they used to sing in old times—and then Ellen gathered up all the power she had to an intensity of listening, that no clear fresh note of the sweet boyish voice—the voice she was never to hear singing again—should escape her ears. As the grey dawn crept up the sky the wind freshened a little, and Connor insisted on wrapping the greatcoat James had thoughtfully brought for him, round Ellen, who shuddered with cold.

"Never mind," James said, "it was a breath of the sea that had met them; and the neighbourhood of the sea meant freedom and safety close at hand—within their grasp—if, please God, no misfortune came at the last hour to snatch it from them."

The thought nerved them to fresh exertion, wearied as

they were. Half an hour afterwards there was the sea—Galway harbour, with the Atlantic beyond, divided from them only now by the narrow channel that connects the lake with the bay, and still the sun had only just lifted its head, a fiery red ball, from the waters of the lake stretched out far behind them. They were in time. Connor soon pointed out to Ellen the emigrant ship lying beyond the harbour-bar which he had visited with D'Arcy, and where he was secure of reception if he could reach her unchallenged. Other little boats were putting out to her from the shore as they got clear of Friar's Cut—boats filled with emigrants and their friends who had kept together till the last, and were now in frantic haste to gain the ship's side; for the signal had been hoisted that the anchor was under weigh. Their haste need excite no surprise. Ellen fancied she should feel quite happy when once she had seen Connor climb the side of the vessel and lose himself in the crowd that, early as was the hour, crowded her decks—he would be safe then. Yet, when they shot under the ship's bows, and the confused cries and discordant noises of departure rang in her ears, and Connor, putting down his oar, bent towards her and drew her face to his, it was as if the very bitterness of death had come with the last moment. Her head fell forward powerless on his breast, and James, raising it gently,

called on Connor to make haste and get away before she awoke from unconsciousness. She did not hear the compassionate remarks passed round among the occupants of the other boats about the poor young servant lad whose sweetheart had fainted when he wished her good-bye, and she missed the sight of a face thrust over the ship's side that flushed with eager joy as Connor sprang up the ladder. She was conscious of nothing more till nearly half an hour afterwards, when she raised her head from the bottom of the boat where James had placed her, and saw in front of her a track of light on the dancing waves, and in the midst of it a ship with sails full set dropping down westward.

CHAPTER X.

Oh heart! oh, blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns,
For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest.
Love is best.

"I CONFESS I don't understand on what grounds you two have come to such a sudden understanding without a word of consent from either of your guardians, madam. Don't you know that I can withhold every penny of your fortune for the next five years, if I please? Would it not have been better to propitiate me by making some show of deference, and honestly letting me know at least that it was an accepted lover I was bringing to you from prison the first thing this morning? I ought to have had the choice, I consider; I might have preferred leaving him where he was, if I had known the extent of his pretensions. Nothing like a week in prison, it seems, for giving a shy man confidence."

"Oh, John, John, it has been such a happy morning. I did not think it possible for any one in the world to be so happy as I—as we are now, dear, dear John," and Lesbia, who had just emerged from an inner room where she and Mrs. Daly and Pelham had been closeted together for nearly two hours, nestled closely to her brother and laid her flushed cheek on his arm.

"Oh, yes, it's all very well to come coaxing me now after keeping me waiting here in the ante-room with my hands full of business, till you deigned to come and explain your and your young man's extraordinary behaviour on meeting this morning. Am I your guardian, or am I not? Can I stop the supplies if you marry without my consent, or can I not? That is what I want you to consider."

"Oh, John, I wish you would," said Lesbia, lifting up her head eagerly. "I believe it would be a great relief to him if I might come to him poor just at first. If I could have the years till I am three-and-twenty for living with him at Eagle's Edge, and waiting on them all, as I would; while he kept his own name that he values above all my money. If I might do that, nothing would be wanted to make our happiness perfect."

"A perfect little romance, I dare say, till you had tried it."

"John, it is not like you to believe only in the mean

motives; but I see you are only joking. You *will* allow, won't you, that it is true love, and that he is making sacrifices for love of me? His name, that he has a right to be proud of, and the feeling so strong in him of dislike to owe his worldly prosperity to his wife; it is generous to give up all that for me."

"Oh, I can believe in any amount of unpractical Irish pride."

"And in higher feeling than pride, John."

"Well, come, then, to satisfy you I will confess. We had some conversation during our walk from the prison here early this morning while you were asleep, not knowing what had come to pass; and I was very well satisfied with what I heard. He spoke of you in a very honest and manly way; and I acknowledge that he has behaved well in difficult circumstances throughout, and that he is a fine fellow. There, thank you, that will do; you had better reserve your kisses and raptures. I don't appreciate vicarious affection."

"But, John, indeed I am grateful."

"Oh, yes, I daresay; but you have not explained the manner of your meeting yet. Nothing he said gave me to understand that you were on such terms of mutual understanding as warranted——"

"You see it was so sudden, John, we had not heard a word from you."

"No, my letter was sent to Castle Daly, and will come back some time to-day, I suppose."

"To see him follow you into the room when we thought im in prison was such an overwhelming surprise and joy."

"But it hardly justified you in throwing yourself into his arms."

"Oh! I did not do that."

"Something rather like it, little one."

"I told you in one of my letters, did I not, about our meeting on the road?"

"You could not, I should suppose, have had much to say to each other on the road."

"Not to say; but, John, if you have ever cared for any one very much you will understand. One may go on doubting and doubting for years, and yet knowing underneath all the time, and then at once some little word or look makes, what had seemed only a thought before, become a reality for one's whole life. It would not need any more talking about."

"Then I must say you have wasted a great deal of time this morning. Only on the plea of *its* wanting a great deal of talking about can I excuse you for having kept me hanging about waiting for you two entire hours."

"You are only pretending to be angry, I see; and it has been such a happy time. Yes, certainly, we have talked. Mrs. Daly went up stairs to her own room on purpose, and we had to go back and explain to each other; how it all grew up from the old times at Whitecliffe, when he began by being sorry for me, and doing me little services in secret; and when I found out that I could rely on his thoughtfulness and kindness, so much more securely than on Connor's, though he was so pleasant, and said so much. You would not grudge me the time, dear, if you only knew how happy it had been."

"That is a knowledge which you confidently believe me to be quite incapable of attaining to. It is a sealed book you have got open between your hands, and no one has ever had a glimpse into it before, I suppose."

"Not you, John. Of course, I don't mean to say that you may not care very much for some one. But there is such a difference when one *knows* it is a mutual caring. *That* makes it all solemn and real—then one begins to understand," said Lesbia, drawing up her head with a far-off indication of approaching wifely dignity.

"Oh, yes, I see," said John. "Then one understands the amazing selfishness that two people absorbed in each

other can attain to. I can't say I much desire initiation into that mystery of human nature."

"Have I really been very selfish for keeping you?"

"Well, not very. I have some other prisoners, victims with Pelham, of O'Roone's spite, to look after; but if I could have done anything for them at this particular time I should not have waited. I was not thinking of myself. I was wondering how you two have contrived to forget other anxieties and other people's cares, and be as happy as you profess yourselves this morning. It does not seem to have occurred to you that Miss Daly, as far as you know, has not heard your good news yet, and may be suffering great anxiety for both her brothers."

"I thought you had written to her."

"I sent a hasty line to Castle Daly, and I hope she has it this morning, but we can't be sure. I must remain in Galway to complete my business; but I should have thought you would have been anxious to get back to Castle Daly as soon as possible."

"So we all are. Mrs. Daly only lingers in hope of getting news of Connor. Pelham has heard, through some of his fellow-prisoners, that Connor is hiding in Galway waiting for an opportunity to get off to America, and we think that as soon as it is known Pelham is free, Connor

will contrive through some of his confederates to communicate with us."

"He had better do nothing of the kind till he is fairly out of reach of the law. It would risk his own safety, and compromise Pelham over again. Any message he may leave behind him will find you out at Castle Daly, when he has made good his escape."

"I will tell them what you say, and Mrs. Daly will be as anxious to hurry our departure as you can be. Oh, John, dear, let me run away at once, there is Captain Pelham coming up the hotel steps. He has been to see us every day since we came here, and talks of nothing but of how many more rebel leaders have been taken prisoners, which makes Mrs. Daly very nervous. I must leave him to you to-day. I could not bear to see him just now."

"Comes to see you every day! why I thought you had dismissed him?"

"Oh, yes; but we have had an explanation. He has confessed that he sought my society chiefly because I let him talk of Connemara, and I have told him that I listened to him only because it was of Connemara he talked. The sisters were stupid and misunderstood, and for a little while made him believe I liked him, and that he was bound to ask me; but now we have been perfectly frank with each other, and are better friends than ever.

I could not refuse to let him come and talk in the old strain of Connemara, or rather of Ellen Daly. Yes, I let him talk, but I don't encourage him, John, because I think of you. Such an idea as *you* for her has never entered into his head. He fears no one but the rebel cousin to whom some people say she is engaged: and he looks in the papers every day hoping to see that he is taken prisoner. He says it would be the best possible fortune for Ellen if her Irish cousin were taken and hanged, as he deserves; but I can't bear to have it said, for Pelham would not like it, so I will leave him to you to-day. Please go and meet him in the hall and take him off."

John was the less disposed to forgive Lesbia for thrusting the task of entertaining her quondam confidant upon him, when he found that there was no possibility of civilly shaking off the young officer at the entrance of the hotel. Captain Pelham had come to while away a dull hour in talk with Lesbia, but as she was not to be had he was nearly as well pleased to get rid of the time by accompanying John wherever he might be going, and discussing with him the scraps of news in the morning papers he had already acquainted himself with.

"Two more of the club leaders taken by the police," he began. "Have you seen it? They were prowling about the roads near, and were spotted by the constables from

their footsore condition and hang-dog looks. That's three of the gentlemen disposed of, whose tall talk has cost us, and I don't know how many more of her Majesty's regiments, to say nothing of ships of war, a journey to Ireland, and the loss of comfortable quarters. Not that I mind it personally, for as it happens I had rather be here than anywhere else. We shall have to stay in Ireland till the trials of the state prisoners are over, I expect, for fear of attempts at rescue; and some of the most conspicuous of the agitators are missing still. That fellow, O'Donnell—have you seen an account that has appeared lately in a government paper, of a speech he made on the occasion of the return of their precious delegates from Paris? There is rank treason enough in it to hang ten men."

"I ran my eye through it—it was arrant absurdity; but it was spoken under excitement by a lad of twenty-three, and a poet; that ought to be taken into consideration."

"I don't see why it should. There's no law that I know of to justify poets at any age in speaking treason against the Queen. Paltry considerations like that are just what I'm afraid of. If we had a good strong Tory Government now, we should be secure of the thing being rightly gone through with, and a lesson given that would keep the poetasters silent for a generation or two, but you shilly-shallying Whigs will be for half measures. For

sending the traitors across the sea, whence they can send their poison back to disturb weak minds for another half century. Ugh! it's enough to make one sick!"

They were now walking down Castle Street, and John stopped before the monument let into the wall of Lynch Castle, to mark the spot where the stern father executed his rebellious son, with his own hands, in the face of an execrating Celtic crowd, who could not appreciate the immolation of live family love to dead law.

"You rival old Lynch in public spirit," John said, looking up at the cross-bones. "You would not object to see your cousin Connor Daly hanged, I suppose, for the sake of justice?"

"Yes, but I should; he's not altogether an Irishman, but he has good English blood in his veins, and though I have always thought him the weakest fool I ever came across, I can make allowance for his having been misled. I was speaking of D'Arcy O'Donnell who has brought all this trouble into the family. I have no partiality for hanging, however—it would not be the remedy that *I* should prescribe. If things had gone to my mind, this insurrection with which we have been threatened so long, should have been allowed to make a respectable beginning, and the rebels should have mustered strong enough for something like a campaign, then they would have had

a chance of getting a lesson that would have lasted them a while. We need not have waited for judge and juries to decide where the treason was deep-dyed enough for punishment. Bayonets would have made quicker work."

"Shall you complain of this disappointment to your cousin, Miss Daly?" asked John with a smile lurking in the corner of his mouth, as the thought rose that at all events this rival was not much to be dreaded.

"Why should I not? It is vexation at the misery this wretched business has brought on my aunt and Ellen that makes me so savage. I would have her eyes opened, poor dear girl, for it has been more than one could well bear to see her estranging herself from her best friends, for the sake of unpractical notions whose true bearing she does not in the least comprehend. It has not been her fault; the folly was put into her head by designing people for their own selfish purposes. Once she has come to her senses again she will be all right."

The patronising tone was too much for John, and determined him to end the conversation.

"Let us cross the road," he said; "I want to go into that little jeweller's shop to have my watch regulated; perhaps you would like to walk on—I may be detained there some time."

"Oh, no, I have nothing to do, I may as well turn in

with you as not. There is always something absurd to be seen in the shops here. I daresay we shall find the jeweller selling drugs, or tea, or patent medicines, in turn with his clocks and watches. They are such a beggarly set, one finds something to laugh at wherever one goes here."

It was a low dark room, its projecting bay windows thickly hung with dusty second-hand watches and shabby jewellery, letting in little light from the narrow shady street.

A wizen-faced, spectacled old man, was seated behind the counter, peering into the works of a tarnished silver watch as big as a turnip, by the aid of a dim lamp. John gave his watch and chain into this man's hands with instructions to regulate the one and remedy a twisted link in the other, and then he went and stood at the far end of the shop, absently staring up at the pictured moon face of an eight-day clock, while his companion poked about among the jewel cases, and distracted the shopman's attention from his work by criticising and pricing his goods. A customer entered the shop while this was going on, and after hesitating a moment on seeing it occupied, went up to the owner and spoke a few words to him in a low voice. The old man's shrill answer reached John's ears, and interested him so much as to make him turn round to look at the new comer.

"I am very sorry, sir," the shopman was saying to a tall young man, who leaned so far over the counter that John could not see his face, "I am very sorry, but I could not, as things go, afford to give more than thirty shillings for this ring. The setting is very slight, and we have no sale whatever for such things now."

"I shall not part with it for less than the sum I named —give it back to me," the young man answered with a tone of alacrity in his voice, that sounded to John as if he felt the refusal a reprieve.

"I'm sorry, sir, but money is very scarce just now, and we are overdone with parties bringing trinkets for sale."

"Well, give it me back again."

The speaker rose to his full height, as taking the ring from the shopman's hands he slid it on the finger of his left hand again, and turned to leave the place, almost knocking over Marmaduke Pelham, who during the whole transaction had stood close to the counter, with his eyes fixed intently on the ring the jeweller was examining. John started, for there was something in the stranger's unusual height and air that struck him as familiar, and he was coming forward to question the shopman when Captain Pelham rushed up to him, seized him by the arm and dragged him out of the shop, without giving him time to speak.

"Here," he said; "this way—I want to keep that man in sight; don't stop walking to answer me; but have you any idea who that is?"

"No; how should I?"

"Then I can tell you—it's D'Arcy O'Donnell; or if not O'Donnell himself, a confederate whom he has sent to raise money for his escape to America. That was *her* ring he was trying to sell. Yes, *hers*, Ellen Daly's; she must have given it to him, curse him; and he is trying to raise money for his escape on it, the beggar!"

"Be calm; don't excite yourself. You can't be sure of this," John answered, surprised at the excitement that made the young man's cheek turn white and his eyes flash.

"I *am* sure; I could swear to that ring among a thousand. I gave it to her myself. I spent the first ten-pound note I ever possessed in my life on it, and she has given it to him. Come on; I sha'n't be calm while there's a chance of that fellow's giving us the slip among these narrow streets. We must see him into a house, and then fetch a constable. There are too many ragamuffins here lounging about who would help him off in a scuffle to attempt his arrest in the street. Ah, he is striking across the square! Let us keep within an easy distance; he is conspicuous enough in open ground."

"What a likeness to your uncle, Mr. Daly!" exclaimed John; "I could fancy it was himself come to life again. You are right; that must be D'Arcy O'Donnell. Did the likeness strike you?"

"No; I saw nothing but the ring. I hardly looked at the scoundrel's face; I didn't want to see him."

By this time the object of their pursuit had crossed Eyre Square, and after pausing for a moment at the entrance of a small eating-house at the corner of South Street, opened the half-door and entered. John and Marmaduke reached the shop a few moments after his disappearance, but on looking in saw no one but an old woman seated on a stool in the middle of the floor, beating up eggs vehemently in a basin. From her there was of course nothing to be gained, in answer to their questions, but a flood of Irish, and Captain Pelham, disconcerted and breathless, retreated into the street, drawing John after him.

"Well," he said, "I suppose there's nothing for it but to bring a party of constables to search the house as soon as possible. We saw him go in there with our own eyes, and we can't be humbugged out of that if the whole town takes to speaking nothing but Irish. You stay and watch that he does not leave the house by either the back or front door. See, it's a corner-house, with a second door

into that little street. You can easily keep your eye on both till I come back. You may depend on me not to be long away."

John stood at the door of the little eating-house till Captain Pelham had again crossed the square and disappeared round its opposite corner; then he raised the latch of the half-door and entered the shop, and once more confronted the voluble Irish-speaking old woman. She would not even look at him this time, but went on vehemently beating her eggs, without taking the smallest notice of his approach. He touched her on the shoulder at last, and put down a sovereign on the counter near her.

"I believe that you understand English as well as I do," he said. "Now listen to me. I am a friend to the gentleman who is now in your room upstairs, and mean to help him to escape if possible; but there is not a moment to be lost. Take me to him at once if you value his safety."

She looked up at him keenly for a second or two without speaking.

"Will you swear to me, by the blessed Lord, who was betrayed Himself, that you are not schaming treachery?" she said at last.

"I will," John answered earnestly. "I swear that I mean kindly to the person I am seeking; and I take Him

who was betrayed Himself to witness that I have no guile in my thoughts."

"Then you can't do more; for who would punish treachery if not Him that died by it!" she said slowly. "Take back your gould, sir; I don't want that. Would I be paid for saving my foster-son, do you think? Come along this way and I'll let you see him."

She led the way up a dark staircase, and pushing open a door at its head, ushered him into a decent room furnished as a dining-room, with chairs round a table covered with lately-used plates and dishes, and a horse-hair sofa at the far end, on which lay the man Marmaduke and John had pursued, already in a deep sleep. John only had a glimpse round the room, but he could always afterwards recall its appearance exactly. The oddly-shaped corners, the look of untidy comfort, the gaudy strip of carpet in the window-recess, the full-length shiny oil-painting of Daniel O'Conner that hung above the fireplace. Still less did he ever forget the attitude and expression of the figure asleep on the sofa; for at sight of that all the other surroundings passed out of his mind, and another long-past scene rose up before his eyes, in which he felt as if he were again acting a part. He saw in memory a figure stretched out on a bare earthen floor, and a face hardly paler than the one now before him, and bearing

a wonderful resemblance to it, which turned dying eyes to his, and said, with wan smiling lips, "I am glad I came here to-night instead of you." If John had had a doubt about what he meant to do; if chivalrous feeling towards Ellen Daly's chosen lover had not already decided him on taking a certain course—that recollection and resemblance would have been enough. He stepped quickly across the room, and laid his hand on D'Arcy O'Donnell's shoulder.

"Mr. O'Donnell," he said, "you are in danger here—wake up. You have been watched into this house by an enemy, and a constable will be here in five minutes to arrest you. You had better leave this at once, and go to some securer hiding-place."

The sleeper woke up at the first touch, and was on his feet before John had half finished speaking, but after the first startled expression had passed, a change came over his face, and he sat down again.

"You say you are a friend, and you no doubt mean kindly, but I wish that you had let me have my sleep out," he remarked quietly; "five minutes more of such sleep as I was enjoying would have been worth a great deal more to me than five more days of being hunted about. The end must come sooner or later; I had made up my mind to that when I turned in here; so why not this minute?"

"Come away with me—you have no time to lose," said

John, authoritatively; "we will talk when we are in the street."

"My boy—my boy—do as the gentleman bids ye," pleaded the old woman; "he has sworn to me that he means well by ye, and ye would not break me heart intirely by letting the constables take ye under the roof where ye was nursed a baby? Would I iver sleep aisy beneath it agin?"

"You are right, Biddy, I need not inflict that trouble on you in return for your goodness, to make your house a marked place. I will go then and get my last free night's sleep somewhere else if I can."

He kissed the old woman on the cheek as he passed her in the doorway, and in another minute he and John were outside, walking along the square, in the direction of West Bridge, side by side. John slipped his hand under his new acquaintance's arm.

"I want to have a word or two with you; and yet I would not intrude on your retreat. Is there any direction in which you can walk safely without showing me more than you wish?"

"I am going towards the Claddagh; and I have no objection at all to your knowing that I have been living in the cabin of one of the Claddagh fishers for the last ten days. They hold themselves tolerably free of the law, and

seldom admit a constable into the domains of the Fish King, so that the harbouring of one offender, more or less, is hardly likely to be brought home to them. Have you ever walked through the district?"

"No, never. I have always been told it was hardly safe for a stranger to do so."

"Then come with me, it is worth your seeing; and as you seem to have made me a generous present of a summer's evening in the open air, I may as well spend an hour of it in introducing you to the alien people who must have been brought through the sea by some Pied Piper centuries ago. The reigning monarch is a friend of mine—though he is not a friend to 'the cause.' He would be quite as unwilling to recognise King O'Brien as Queen Victoria, for a rival authority to his own."

They had crossed the bridge now, and leaving the better houses and more regular streets behind them, were approaching a mass of low-roofed mud cabins, that stretched in long straggling rows across the plain, composed of mud and sand, partially covered with coarse grass, that sloped down to the sea-shore. As they approached the huts, two or three sturdy young men, with dark faces and fierce black eyes, strolled out as if to meet and inspect them, before they were permitted to enter the district. D'Arcy made some sign to them, and they moved aside, with a nod

of welcome, and permitted him and his companion to pass on. The appearance of a decently-dressed stranger in the sodden grass-grown space between the cabins, which troops of half-naked children shared with herds of pigs, and flocks of geese and poultry, was evidently an unusual event and brought all the inhabitants of the place to stare from, the open doors of the windowless cabins. Into their dark recesses, lighted only by the dull glow of peat cinders on the hearths, John had ample opportunity to stare in return, for his progress through the live impedimenta that surged round was necessarily very slow. Withered old hags, lean and haggard, crouched on the door-sills, and smoked short pipes up into his face. Stalwart dark-browned men leaned listlessly against the door-posts, and sent suspicious glances after him. Slim brown girls, with shapely bare feet, and faces of a strange foreign beauty, peeped at him from under their head-shawls, with large soft gazelle eyes, such as painters love to depict over an Arab woman's face veil, while they twirled spindles before him, and turned spinning wheels, of shapes that were in vogue centuries ago. By the time he had reached the end of the last row of cabins, he felt as if he had passed through some strange phantasmagoric vision, where every gradation of human shape, from hideous deformity to the beauty of dream-land, was presented to him in a rapid succession that took away his

breath. One of the ugliest of the old hags, a moving mass of rags, filth, and wrinkles, stood before him as they were leaving the most densely thronged lane of cabins, and holding out a skinny hand, whined for alms. John was drawing out his purse, when D'Arcy stopped him.

"No, don't do that; don't let them see money; you would hardly get out of the place alive. It's a terrible thing to say, but it is true, this year, when the herring fishery having failed them, they are feeling the famine with the rest. You might walk through this place at night, with a hundred pounds in your pockets, no one would think of robbery; but if they believed they could coax or frighten you into giving, you would have no chance of getting away till you had parted with your last farthing. They are beginning to look anxiously at you now—let us move on."

The cabins were less crowded together as they proceeded, and soon they reached a white open road, terminating in a sandy ridge; on climbing which they saw the waters of the bay at their feet, divided from them only by a yellow strip of sandy beach. The fresh sea breeze and the stillness of the afternoon in this quiet place were welcome, after the crodw and din they had left a very little way behind them, D'Arcy lifted his hat to let the wind freshen his face, and then turned to John, with a smile and a half bow.

"I have shown you the Claddagh, in return for the great kindness you conferred on me an hour ago; and now perhaps it is time to say good-bye, and rid you of my company. I perceive you know who I am, and though I have not the benefit of the same knowledge with respect to yourself, I see you are an Englishman, and hardly suppose you can be anxious to be seen with me under present circumstances. I shall not forget that you have given me a last look at the sea."

"But, excuse me, I have not yet said what I followed you to say. You must not think me impertinent, but I want you to tell me what you intend to do next."

"Go back to the Claddagh for to-night, and to-morrow morning walk into the town and give myself up to the authorities there, who are on the look-out for me. The boys who have sheltered me during the last week would not touch blood-money, or I would make one of them give me up and earn the two hundred pounds, that would keep the whole clan in luxury till better times come."

"Why give yourself up? have you no better prospect than that?"

"This morning I had, and the disappointment has broken me down. Do you see that ship riding at anchor, just beyond the harbour bar? This morning I hoped to be on board her before night. The captain had agreed to

receive me and a friend of mine on board, and would have asked no questions. I was waiting only for my passage-money, for which I had written to a friend, whom I had substantially helped more than once in happier days, and who would, I felt sure, have no difficulty in lending me the small sum I asked. I risked a walk into the town to-day to get this letter (postmen don't frequent the Claddagh), and I had directed my friend to send it to my foster-mother's house. I received a shabby excuse—no money—and the ship sails early to-morrow. In fulfilment of a promise I once gave, I made an attempt to raise the few pounds I wanted so much on the only thing left in my possession that was worth selling, but, to confess the truth, I was not very sorry to fail. I could not raise my passage-money to America on my solitary valuable; but I am not sure that it is not worth more to me, than say ten years more of life out there—as things are now—I don't covet them."

"But you ought; at your age, and with your powers, you ought to cling to life; it is a cowardly act to let it slip from you for want of resolution."

D'Arcy shrugged his shoulders, and looked back at the Claddagh.

"Would you have me pass the rest of my days indebted for shelter and my daily bread, to the poor fellows there

—or what? I don't believe I have a friend in Ireland, besides the one whose letter of excuse I have in my pocket, who has the power to help we with money this year."

"Yes, there is one person to whom you were indirectly the means of bringing a considerable sum of money, and some repute that has been of service to him since, and who always felt in your debt on that account. I know him; let me be his banker, and hand you over a portion of the sum he believes you helped him to earn. The Claddagh people have spared my purse, you see, and it is as well they did so, as there is a ten-pound note in it. Let it be a loan from my friend if you like it better."

D'Arcy's face flushed. "I don't understand in the least —this is some generous fiction."

"Do you remember an essay in one of the Quarterlies, on 'Recent Irish Poetry?' It was inspired by your verses, and it is the writer of that article who considers himself your debtor."

"John Thornley—and you then are John Thornley?"

"It won't make you less willing to agree to my proposition that your guess is right," said John, holding out his hand.

D'Arcy clasped it in both his. "It makes me cease to wonder at your generous kindness. I have heard of you from my cousins—but, indeed, I cannot——"

"Yes, yes, you can; as I said before, at your age, and with your powers, you have no right to throw away any chance of redeeming the past."

"Redeeming—you are an Englishman. You utterly disapprove of all I have done. How can you reconcile it to your principles to aid my escape?"

"I leave it to you to justify me in the long run; but we waste time and opportunity in talking. Let us walk down to the beach. Do not I see some of your Claddagh fishermen pushing a boat into the sea? Let us meet them—come."

John walked on at a quick pace across the sand towards the boat, and D'Arcy followed. The evening tide was flowing in calmly and slowly, the little waves broke in musical ripples close to their feet. When they were within a few paces of the boat, D'Arcy paused and looked all round him, like a man just waking out of a dream. He took off his hat again, and the sea wind blew in his face. It came to him like an invitation from the land of freedom, and he felt in a moment that the power to persist in rejecting John's offer and return to the prospect of imprisonment and death had gone from him. From the sunny sky and the wide blue sea life had held out her arms to him, and was sweet still. He ran after John, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I accept your offer," he said; "you have given me back my life. I will take it at your hands, and owe you a life's gratitude for your conduct to-day. These fishers down there with the boat are waiting for me. It was agreed this morning that they should meet me here, at the turn of the evening tide, and I have not had an opportunity of acquainting them with my change of purpose. They would have waited in vain till morning but for you; but I think you had better not let them see you, as they will perhaps mistrust a stranger and an Englishman, and suspect danger."

John gave the purse into O'Donnell's hands, as he again shook them warmly. "We part here then; but I think there is a great deal more to come—that we shall hear of each other in the future."

"I know there is," said D'Arcy; "and, anyhow, I am glad I have seen you. I'll never forget your face now." His eye rested on John for a moment, with a peculiar look, keen and full of pain, and yet satisfied. "He'll do, I think," he said to himself, in a low voice. "It is what I might have expected." Then with another warm clasp of the hand, he turned away and walked rapidly towards the boat, whose owners had now recognized him, and were making signs to him to hasten.

John made his way back to the top of the sand ridge,

whence he saw the whole process of the launch of the little fishing boat on the crest of a wave, the rowers taking their seats; the hoisting of the tiny sail, and its progress for some distance towards an opposite point of the compass to that where the emigrant ship lay. He watched it in all its devious tacks, till it was a little dark speck on the blue water; and longer still, till under cover of the deepening twilight, it drew near its real destination. Then he got up and walked towards the lighted town. He thought a great deal of D'Arcy, and the probable after course of the life he had that day given back to its owner; a great deal, too, of Mr. Daly on his death night. But most of all of Ellen, on the evening when she had read his first essay on D'Arcy's poems, and looking up to him with flashing eyes, had said the words that rankled in his heart still: "I hate every word of it." Would she ever come to know what he had done to-day, or be able in the smallest degree to estimate what it had cost him?

CHAPTER XI.

'Oh, heart! oh, blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest,
Love is best!"

R. BROWNING.

THE strength of the storm is spent, the highest wave has struck the hill, and fallen back baffled with hoarse murmuring of sullen complaint, yet the spectators on the shore, and the sailors out at sea, do not feel as yet any change and are slow to believe in the sunshine and calm that is on the way to them. The winds moan and sigh in sharp short gusts that may be the beginning of a new storm, the waves climb and threaten the shore with angry white heads, only thrust a little less near each time of approach; it takes a long time to ascertain positively by observation that the tide has turned. So it usually is in seasons of great calamity, national or private, the worst is past long before the sufferers admit hope into their hearts,

or are able to acknowledge to themselves that the severest stress of their pain is over. There are almost always recurrences of calamity, new threatenings, fears, great shakings of the worn out or wounded souls which keep the agitated sea of emotion heaving and quivering for a long time before it can rock itself to the old calm. Long years must often pass before we can look back on a season of affliction, and referring to an event or hour say, "Yes, that was the time when the waves went over our heads and the bitterness of death was tasted, but after that slowly and gradually we began to take heart again; there were fallings back, clouds returning after rain, but the heartening, the restoring season set in after that hour."

The autumn months that followed Connor's and D'Arcy's escape to America were for the Dalys and their friends, and for the majority of the inhabitants of Good People's Hollow and its neighbourhood, one of those seasons of slowly returning prosperity and content broken by recurring anxieties and cares. The first days of Mrs. Daly's return from Galway with Lesbia and Pelham were clouded by anxiety about Ellen, whom they found at Good People's Hollow in a state of such extreme weakness and prostration as hardly to be able to give an intelligible account of her night excursion down the lake, or of Connor's escape to the emigrant ship. Anne O'Flaherty had died during

the night of her absence, and the shock of returning to the empty house, and of finding for the first time in all her experience, no one there to whom she could unburden her heart of its anxiety and agitation had been more overwhelming than all her previous suffering, or rather it had been the last straw of the long-accumulating burden, under which her energies, now no longer tasked on anyone's behalf, finally succumbed. For days and days she lay on her bed a prey to the slow consuming fever that had carried off so many victims from Ireland during the last sad years, not suffering much, and pronounced by Dr. Lynch to be in no present danger, but hardly ever conscious of what was going on around her, seeming to lead a curious double existence, in which she alternately lived over again the hours of the night journey down the lake, or accompanied Anne O'Flaherty across the dark waters of an unknown river, from the opposite bank of which voices hailed her, inviting her to approach nearer.

There was one person of the party who could distinctly have told what was the worst part of the suffering he endured in that eventful year. It was John Thornley, and he would have assigned his bitterest pangs to certain days when he rode up to the door of Happy-go-lucky Lodge with an intolerable ache of anxiety in his heart, and from an open window wreathed with passion flowers caught

tones of the voice he loved best in the world, uttering mournful incoherent words that were now reiterated farewells, and now phrases of glad greeting and recognition that struck colder that even the farewells on his ear.

Anne O'Flaherty's funeral took place while Ellen's fever was at its height, and a fortnight after a second grave was opened in the churchyard under the hill, from which Connor and D'Arcy had resuscitated the arms, where the body of Peter Lynch was laid close to that of his mistress. The arrangements for both these ceremonies were left to Pelham's care, for John seemed just then unable to attend to the most necessary business, and in after times Lesbia was wont to boast of the tact and knowledge of the people which Pelham displayed on those occasions, satisfying even the most exacting, that the utmost point of old custom and traditional respect and observance was rendered to the memory of the two who had lately reigned supreme over the district.

"He pretends that I helped him," she would say in conclusion, "but I am sure I don't know how he can imagine such a thing, for all I ever did was to sit beside him while he considered exactly how poor Connor would have ordered all if he had been master here instead of us; and then he and I agreed together to carry out what we believed would have been Connor's wishes. Pelham does

not object, as he once would have done, to the enthusiasm the people feel for him now, because they believe he suffered for the cause. Since he has been in prison with some of the boys and has got to know them thoroughly he can put up with their warm expressions of thanks and gratitude, and no longer thinks it humbug. He is even at the bottom of his heart very much obliged to them for having given him back their allegiance so readily, and being as glad as they all are, that he is coming back to Castle Daly to reign over them; as glad, it really seems, as they would have been if his father had come to life again, or the revolution had succeeded, and Connor had got the estate back for his own. John says that it is very illogical of them to go on talking about him as if he had both suffered for the cause, and given himself up, though innocent, to save his brother; because he could not have done the two things. The people about here, however, will always go on saying that he did both, and if they mean that double praise and gratitude are due to him, I think myself that somehow, in spite of John, their way of understanding his conduct must be the right one."

The satisfaction felt by the neighbourhood in the funeral observances with which Miss O'Flaherty and Peter Lynch were laid to their rest, though it did something to soothe the wild grief of the inhabitants of Good People's Hollow,

did not by any means overshadow their anxiety for Ellen's recovery. This John Thornley had to acknowledge to himself when he went among the crowd assembled in and about the tent where Peter Lynch's wake feast was held. He had come out in a mood of restless misery, seeking not so much for distraction as for that bitter tonic of self-pity which he fancied would be afforded by the sight of other people's forgetfulness contrasted with his own overwhelming anxiety, and he received a medicine different from that he had come to seek; the balm of a sympathy so pervading and true, that its subtle soothing could not but creep to the heart most resolved to hug its sorrow in solitude.

There was revelling here and there, and everywhere the eager delight at the sight of plenty which might be expected from those who had had want for their daily companion during three long years. But as John passed from group to group and listened to the words that fell from the lips of the feasters, he could not find any of the disgust or grudging in his mind that he had expected such a scene on the eve of a funeral, while the most popular person in the neighbourhood lay in peril of death, would have called up. He did not even wince when he heard Ellen's named passed about by people who had been drinking and shouting a few minutes before, or feel greatly

scandalized when girls broke from a dance to throw themselves on their knees in the corner of the tent, and begin with streaming eyes to recite the prayers they had vowed to offer hour by hour for her recovery. It might be all very grotesque, very inconsistent, very reprehensible, when regarded from a distance, but at the time, objections and repugnances were fused in the white heat of a common emotion, which through all the uncouth and childish forms of its manifestation proved itself true and deep. John even found that his English reserve could bear, without much pain, the shock of perceiving that his own peculiar right of participation in the prevailing anxiety was recognised and silently honoured, known even to mean what it did mean. To his own surprise he found himself not outraged and pained, but touched almost to tears when a bare-footed girl who had lately, with much blushing, brought up a ragged shamefaced youth and presented him to Lesbia, turned towards him and raising soft blue eyes to his face, offered him a bunch of white roses, with the information that they were gathered from a tree that Miss Eileen herself had planted by their cabin door, and that every future flower the tree might bear was vowed to the Blessed Virgin's altar for Miss Eileen's recovery.

"Shure," the girl added, with a shy glance at the boy still hovering near, "it's a tinder sympathy wid the true

lovers our Blessed Lady has, for did not she hear me when I went to her for my own bachelor, that is my husband to-day, and put it into your honour's heart, the saints reward ye for that same, to get him back for me out of prison?"

Bride Thornley, for whose speedy return John had entreated, arrived at the Hollow the day after Peter Lynch's funeral, and a few hours after her entrance into the house was installed in full charge of the sick-room. Order, regularity and calm seemed to follow her steps, and from that day the invalid began to mend. Bride would not have permitted a wake to take place within a few yards of the room where her patient lay sick of nervous fever, and she could not conceal the contempt she felt for the excuses which John and Pelham urged in excuse of their compliance. After a trifling disagreement, however, on that score, everything went smoothly. Mrs. Daly, who was of too anxious a temperament to make a good sick nurse, was thankful to yield the chief management of the sick-room to Bride's skilful hands, and Ellen, who had never in her days of health sought Bride's company, turned to her in her suffering and weakness with an absolute clinging dependence that laid a strong hold on Bride's generous nature, and banished every shade of jealousy or grudging from her heart for ever. As day by day little tokens of amendment in the patient's state

appeared, and were attributed by Dr. Lynch to Miss Thornley's careful nursing, fresh links were woven between these two, and when Bride dressed Ellen on the first day of her leaving her room she did not feel as if it were the old rival whom she had distrusted and been tempted to envy, whose golden hair she arranged with affectionate pride, but rather some altogether new creature whose charms and whose manifold sweetnesses were in some sort a possession of her own that could hardly be rightly appreciated by anyone but herself. It had not come into her previous experience to be brought into close intimacy with a person to whom expressions of affection, and tender flatteries, and eager acts of love came spontaneously and followed feeling as necessarily as breathing does being; and after the first surprise she could not deny that this gracious warmth of nature was pleasant to her and would be missed as the unclouded sunshine of southern lands is missed by those who return to colder climates. She began to dread the thought of living out of sight of the one face that now always flushed with pleasure when she came near, out of reach of the hands ever ready to be stretched out towards her for welcome or caresses, out of hearing of the voice that in all the feebleness of sickness had been so profuse in thanks for every little service rendered. She did not know that she could

face the blank such a loss would leave any better than John could really face the estrangement he was always anticipating as the end of their present engrossment in the Dalys' affairs.

When Ellen was well enough to be left for an hour or so of an evening, Bride and John used to pace up and down the short garden walk in front of the house while Pelham and Lesbia indulged in endless lovers' talk in the sheltered nook of the bridge head that had been the lovers' corner ever since the bridge was built. Then John always propounded the same plan for their joint future lives which Bride always listened to with the same consciousness that he was longing all the time for her to dispute its inevitableness, and the same wonder at herself for the pain it cost her not to be able to do so truthfully. They were to remain a few weeks longer in Ireland till Lesbia was married, and till such arrangements could be made as would enable Ellen Daly to manage the Good People's Hollow estate, left her by Anne, advantageously. Then they would take their departure together and spend a year or so in foreign travel, out of the way of being called upon to take part in events which the next year would certainly bring, viz., the departure of Ellen to join Connor and his friend in America, or, if such a course could be safely ventured, the return of D'Arcy O'Donnell to fetch his

bride, now well enough endowed for such a marriage to be possible. How delightful the prospect of that foreign tour would have been to Bride once, and how she hated now to hear John hold forth upon it with that look of determined resignation on his face, with those long pauses between his words, which were, she knew, employed in listening for the chance of a low voice calling them from the window, or in watching for the appearance of a thin white hand put forth to beckon them in. How jarring it was when instead the wind brought sounds from the bridge's head, sounds of soft mirth and infinite content—

> "The delight of happy laughter,
> The delight of low replies."

Well, life is long after all, and bitterest disappointments are lived over, wound up into the life-web by the Norn's skilful fingers, and hidden away by new threads, of silver perhaps, if not of gold. It was actually only four years since they first came to Ireland; they came two, and they would leave two; and the new foreign home they would make for themselves would no doubt be at first dreary, then tolerable, and then calmly pleasant enough.

As the autumn closed in, the evenings were differently spent. Dr. Lynch was so well satisfied of his patient's re-establishment as to leave Connemara for Dublin, to

give evidence in favour of the prisoners in the State trials going on there through October. He had seen and heard enough, he said, at all events, to speak to the inaccuracy of the statement sworn to by some of the witnesses, that Mr. Smith O'Brien had pointed out the police to his followers, and ordered them to "slaughter the whole of them." After his departure, the chief interest of the day was concentrated on the reading of his letters reporting the progress of the trials, which John fetched each morning from Ballyowen, and read aloud to Bride and Ellen at night.

Pelham's and Lesbia's wedding was fixed for a late day in October, and just a week before, the happy bustle of preparation was somewhat dulled by the gloom which spread over some members of the household, when the news of the sentence passed on the prisoners reached them. John read aloud to the family circle, from which Ellen would not be excluded, the Judge's summing-up, the verdict of the jury, and the awful sentence of the law :—

"That you, —— and ——, and —— be taken hence to the place whence you came, and be thence drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, and that each of you be there hanged by the neck till you be dead ; and that afterwards the head of each of you shall be severed from the

body, and the body of each be divided into four quarters, to be disposed of as her Majesty shall see fit: and may the Almighty God have mercy upon your souls."

There was a long silence after the words were read, and deep sobs from Mrs. Daly were heard through the room; but Ellen lifted up the face she had hidden in her hands dry-eyed, though pale as death.

"Is it very selfish," she asked, in a faint awed voice, "that I can feel nothing?—but, oh, such thankfulness for the omission of one name that might have been in that sorrowful list! I shall be very sorry for those others soon; but just this minute I can only be thankful." She held out her hand to John as she spoke, and he took it and kept the trembling fingers in his steady clasp, till Bride came forward, and carried off her convalescent to bed.

John was alone in Anne's turret room, when Bride came down-stairs again, spreading out his papers on the table, and preparing for a long evening's work.

"You heard her, John," she said, coming up to him eagerly. "You heard it plainly she said *one* name, and she could not have forgotten her brother; it was Connor's name that rose up in her mind; it was Connor who occupied her thoughts so exclusively, as to shut out everyone else. I am certain of that."

"Yes, so am I," said John, deliberately. "I have

thought it over, and I am convinced she meant Connor; but what of that? It was one moment's strong feeling, the love of kindred that in such hearts as hers asserts its supremacy over everything else at times: we ought not to conclude anything from that."

"But, John, now we have begun to speak on the subject, I have something else to tell you. You really must let me speak."

"It cannot be anything of importance."

"But it is something of importance, and I may not be able to get it said if I don't speak now. Yesterday, in looking over a drawer full of old papers of Anne O'Flaherty's, Ellen came upon a letter of mine, addressed to her more than a year ago—at the time when you paid that hasty visit to Ireland. You remember the occasion of it, John?"

"Well."

"She put my letter into her pocket without re-reading it; but when I came back into the room an hour after, I found her crying over it as if her heart would break."

"You had better not have told me this. It is hardly fair towards her, now that you and she are so much to each other, for you to watch her changes of mood and carry them to me; and it is doing me no kindness. To be disturbed by false hopes, when I am learning to think of her

as pledged to another is more than I can bear. Don't try to do it, Bride. Never tell me anything about her again. Let it be a sealed subject between us as hitherto."

"No, no, no!—it shall not. I have been silent a long time, John; I have listened to all your doleful plans, and seen you struggling from day to day, to ossify yourself into a statue of despair, and I have not said a word for fear of hurting you; but now that my own common sense tells me you are making a mistake, I will not hold my tongue any longer. And, John, I never thought I should speak in this fashion to you; but it has come to this—it is for my own happiness I am plotting quite as much as for yours. I can't afford to let her go out of our lives much better than you can; and I tell you this frankly, that if you have not courage to win her and make your life complete, I shall not go away contentedly with the sullen spoilt half of you that will leave Good People's Hollow with me. She must be a witch, for she has got hold of me so completely that I cannot any longer be satisfied with you alone. I shall always feel that something is wanting, and that you will never be worth all you might be even to me, if you don't get her."

"You don't suppose that I want your testimony to that, do you? You don't suppose that I can't feel that better than you?"

"I want to be sure that you feel it enough not to let pride or any other folly lose you a chance of happiness."

"You may be sure that pride shall not. I should have asked her again twenty times over if nothing but pride stood in the way."

"Then let me tell you all I have discovered."

"No, no; she would not like it, and I don't believe you can have discovered anything about her that I don't know by intuition already; but I am all the same obliged to you, Bride, for your zeal, and it will be a link between us whatever falls out, and a spur to urge me to bring a little more than that disagreeable maimed half-self you describe to our common home if we do go away together. Now leave me to write my leading article in favour of a reprieve being granted to the rebels; it must be sent off by the early post to-morrow."

Bride retired to her room, but she observed that John did not immediately turn to his work. She heard him open the front door, and saw him set out in the cold October moonlight for a walk up the valley. On coming down stairs in the early morning next day she found the newspaper article written and folded to go by the post. The state of the candles burned down to the sockets showed that the work had not been completed till very far into the night; yet John did not seem at all fatigued by the

loss of rest; there was more vigour and brightness in his face when he appeared at breakfast than she had seen there for many a day.

The short busy days that were carrying Lesbia on to her crowning day passed in a whirl of occupation with most of the household. Mrs. Daly was a little scandalized that John could seldom be found to give an opinion on any of the arrangements for his sister's wedding. During that last week he was generally either shut up in his study writing newspaper articles or reading MS. to Ellen, and asking her advice how to make a sentence more telling, or an argument in favour of leniency towards the State prisoners more convincing. She thought it a little strange and unsympathetic of those two to be more occupied with questions of politics than with the approaching event in their own families, but Bride's diligence was sufficient for the despatch of all necessary business, and the sight of Pelham's triumphant happiness, and Lesbia's attention to herself, so entirely satisfied her as to leave no room for plaintiveness. The wedding was to be celebrated at Castle Daly. Bride, who had lately been making constant excursions there, left the Hollow finally with John and Lesbia a few days before the day fixed for the ceremony, and Mrs. Daly followed her so as to arrive on the previous afternoon. Pelham gave his last evening to Ellen, who

was not yet strong enough to bear the drive to Castle Daly, and was to be left at the Hollow one solitary day. He was very kind and tender to her during the hours they were alone together, while Ellen reclined on Anne's sofa, wheeled in front of the turf-fire, and Pelham sat on the low stool in the nook by the hearth that used always to be Connor's corner on winter evenings in the old times. They avoided all allusion to the past, and talked cheerfully of the bright future that was opening out for one of the two; and Pelham consulted Ellen about his plans, asking her advice as to his future conduct towards his tenants and dependants with a deference to her superior knowledge of the people which, while it gratified her, gave her a strange sensation of having died to her girlish self, and wakened up in the middle of Anne O'Flaherty's life, with all her former cares resting on her shoulders, and the task given to her of advising the owner of Castle Daly, which Anne had exercised for so many years.

Ellen rose early the next day and saw Pelham ride off in the dewy October morning to his wedding. She fastened the last of the passion-flowers from Anne's favourite creeper into the button-hole of his coat with a keen recollection of how she had intended to bestow some of its earlier blossoms, and then stood in the open doorway and watched his figure lessening along the winding road till it

was lost among the low bushes on the hill-side. The valley had never looked fairer, or showed more like an enchanted region, jewel-paved with emerald and diamond and azure, than it appeared when Ellen found herself left alone to gaze on the misty outline of its protecting hills, the blue thread of its winding river, its opal-coloured lake, and its green slopes all growing momently more distinct in the brightening sunshine. There was the old glamour of beauty, but there was something wanting; the old sights were there, but not the old sounds. A strange silence reigned all about the place that fell like an ache on Ellen's heart, and ere long sent her back with fast-filling eyes to shut herself into the empty house. In vain she told herself that as far as the house was concerned it was only the solitude of one day. Her mother would return happier than she had ever been before, and there would soon be visits from bride and bridegroom, and new interests and pleasures and occupations would spring up, making Happy-go-lucky Lodge a centre of happy life again. As she was quite alone Ellen thought she might spare at least half her thoughts from the joyous event of the day that occupied everybody else entirely, and give herself up for a little space of time to communing with the past, to wandering about the turret-rooms, and in and out of Anne's haunts, and in imagination peopling them with the

figures and faces so familiar to them once, but which they would now know no more. This at least was her uppermost train of thought as she crept languidly up and down stairs, and stood for half-an-hour together looking vacantly round the sitting-rooms. Visions of Anne, and Peter Lynch and Connor, and Murdock Malachy seemed to fill her mind to the exclusion of everything else; and yet if she had spoken out aloud the thought that weighed heaviest on her heart, and seemed to underlie and form a dark background to all her sad recollections, she would have repeated a sentence that had fallen from Pelham's lips on the previous evening, when he had asked her advice on the plea that his old adviser, John Thornley, would soon be altogether out of reach, since he and Bride had decided on starting on their foreign tour immediately after the wedding. The house would not miss them; *they* could not be reckoned among its old frequenters; their faces and figures had no right to come among the throng which Ellen's fancy called up, and whose absence she mourned over; and yet she could not deny to herself that it was the thought of their desertion that made the future she pictured herself as leading in these rooms, so empty of interest, so full of cares too heavy for her to bear alone. Towards afternoon she lay down on a sofa by the turret window and, quite worn out with the agitation of the

morning, fell asleep, and slept for some time, till about an hour before sunset she was awakened by the sound of horse's hoofs on the bridge. She had told herself a great many times during the day that she must not hope for news from Castle Daly till the next morning. No one could be expected to come out to the Hollow on such a busy day merely for the sake of saving her a few hours' solitude and to give her the morning's news a little earlier than her mother could bring it. She had told herself this many times, yet when the turret-room door opened, and John Thornley entered with a bridal-bouquet in his hand, and good news written on his face, she did not feel exactly surprised; she all at once understood that she would have been bitterly disappointed and very unhappy indeed if he had failed to come. Lesbia had sent Ellen her bride's bouquet, John explained, and Ellen, taking it from his hand, buried her face among the orange blossom and white roses, while he took a seat by her sofa, and proceeded to satisfy her curiosity about the morning's ceremony. If he had come solely as news-bearer he did not perform his errand very satisfactorily. His voluntary remarks soon came to an end, and Ellen found it difficult to drag out any but the shortest and least intelligent answers to her questions.

"Why, you might almost as well have been here with

me all the morning for any interesting information you can give me," she said at last. "You don't seem to have seen anything that happened; you must have been dreaming the whole time. I don't suppose there is a child above three years old in all Daly's Corner who could not tell me more about how the bridegroom looked, and how the bride behaved, and what everybody said and did and ate and wore, than you seem able to do."

"Perhaps I was dreaming; it was very much out of place; for by rights on such occasions the bystanders are wide awake and critical, and the principals have the privilege of not knowing what they are doing. However, don't suppose that I am guilty of the presumption of coming to the Hollow to describe what I have not been observing. It was to give you some other news that I rode out here to-night.

"It is not bad news, I can tell by your face. The State prisoners are reprieved.

"I told you that was certain from the first; and if you had looked into the newspaper I sent you this morning, you would have seen the official announcement of the change of their sentence to transportation for life."

"Then you have something else to tell me?"

"Letters from America have arrived at last."

"You have brought me one from Connor?"

"Connor's letters are to your mother and Pelham, and Mrs. Daly was not able to spare hers for you when I started. She had not read it often enough. She will bring it herself early to-morrow. The best I could do for you was to bring you a short note that fell to my share."

"From Connor?"

"No. Would it be too great a favour to ask you to go out with me to the bridge-head? I could talk better there; and I want you to read my American letter, and explain a sentence in it I cannot understand. The air is warm still, and I think you walked as far as the bridge with Pelham yesterday."

"Oh, yes; the walk will do me good."

But though Ellen set forth bravely, her limbs trembled under her before the little space was crossed; and she was glad to find a seat on a moss-grown coping-stone that had long ago fallen from the parapet on the further end of the bridge, and to lean her head back against the wall. It was not fatigue, for she had walked much farther yesterday without being tired; it was something in John's face that agitated her, making her feel that she had once more come to a turning-point in her life when, perhaps—perhaps—all that she had once thrown away might again be placed in her hands to take and keep. John waited silently a few minutes, till she had so far recovered he

strength and breath as to volunteer a faint remark on the beauty of the evening, before he took a letter from his pocket, and, unfolding it, placed it in her hands.

"Read," he said; "it is only half a page; read, and I will come back to you."

He walked away towards the house so as to avoid watching her as she read, and Ellen, in some bewilderment, turned her eyes on a sheet of foreign letter-paper, about half filled with D'Arcy O'Donnell's writing. What could he have to say to John Thornley, whom (as far as Ellen knew) he had never seen? The letter began—

"DEAR FRIEND,—In these modern days, heart's blood and tears are, luckily for us poor poets, sometimes convertible into gold. I have coined some of mine, viz., 'A Call to the Kelts,' and a 'Farewell to Ireland,' printed in *Harper's Magazine*, and herewith despatched to you, with the payment I received for them, being the exact amount of my debt to you. Don't suppose I dream of wiping out in such fashion the obligation incurred by me to you on my last evening in 'ould Ireland.' My gratitude for that is a part of my life, and will only cease with it; but I want to show you that I have lost no time in following your advice in my own fashion. If you will do me one more favour, read my verses to my cousin Ellen Daly, and tell her that, rebel as I am, and shall always remain,

against English supremacy, there is one union between Kelt and Saxon that will have my blessing upon it whenever it takes place. Connor has enlightened me—but I knew it before—and tender you my good wishes most heartily. Of course, you have told her long ere this what you did for me, and it will have pleased her.

"Yours faithfully,

"D'ARCY O'DONNELL."

Ellen had risen from her low seat, and was standing in the middle of the bridge, looking down over the parapet into the river, with the folded letter clasped between her hands, when John returned to her. She did not move or alter her position at the sound of his step, nor even when he came close and stood at her side, till, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he gently touched her shoulder, and said—"Well, have you read?"

Then she turned a face to him into which all the colour and life of old times seemed to have rushed back suddenly, restoring her from the sick, drooping girl of the last few months, to the brilliant Ellen Daly he had first known and loved. The once pale cheeks were full of colour—the eyes of tender, dewy light as closely allied to smiles as to tears.

"I want first to know what you did for him," she said, hurriedly, but timidly, holding out the letter to John.

"Yes, tell me at once; it is a part of the history of that dreadful week before I was taken ill, of which I know nothing, and yet" (dropping her voice very low) "it would have done me good—it would have comforted me beyond anything."

Then John crossed his arms over the parapet, and, leaning so as to look full in her face, gave her, in a voice that he found it hard to keep steady throughout, a detailed account of the events of the afternoon when he had seen D'Arcy O'Donnell for the first and last time; the attempted sale of the emerald ring; his arousing D'Arcy from sleep in the little parlour over the baker's shop; their walk through the Claddagh; their last words on the shore; his own reflections as he sat on the sand-bank and watched the little boat that was bearing O'Donnell away drop down westward.

"It was of you I thought," he said, in conclusion. "It was the lucky man you loved, I believed I was sending away from death or imprisonment. If I could secure your happiness even so, I believed at the moment that I should be content. During these last months there have been times when I have found it very hard to bring that persuasion into your presence. I had come to the conclusion that I could not bear the struggle any longer; that I must leave you for ever. Since reading that letter this morning, the possi-

bility of my being mistaken as to your feelings for your cousin, and of there being still a hope, however distant, for me, has entered my mind. If there is absolutely no hope, tell me at once, and let me go; for less than ever shall I be able to bear the blank of despair, if this gleam goes out in darkness; but if there is a hope—I don't say that you love me already—but that you might possibly come in time to love me, then keep me near you to work for you; at least, till you are stronger, and can do without me. Hold out your hand to me, and I am your servant for as long as you like."

"Nay," said Ellen, holding out her hand, "there would be no use in your staying for that. I have plenty of servants, and the trouble is that I don't know what to do with them."

He took the other hand and drew her towards him.

"But I may stay? and you will try to learn to love me a little?"

"I never believed much in trying; it would not come to me that way," said Ellen, yielding both hands, and allowing herself to be drawn into his arms; "but——

"My darling, I do believe you mean to say that you love me already."

There was no denial, and little more was said till,

when they were sauntering back to the house together, John stood still abruptly by the door-step, and exclaimed—

"It is so wonderful, so bewildering to me, I cannot enter into the joy of it as I ought. You must tell me a little more of the when and the how, to give me certainty."

"Perhaps," Ellen answered, with a trembling smile, and a very dewy light in the eyes she raised to his face, "perhaps it began with the shame I felt for having behaved so badly to you just here, when we stood and said good-bye a year ago, and you went into the turret-room and complained of me to cousin Anne; or perhaps it began long, long before, when we knelt in Dennis Malachy's ruined cabin together that night, and I felt, without understanding it, that my father's love and indulgence for me had passed on to you. I believe it *was* then; though I only knew what had happened to me by the pain that came when I thought I had driven you away from me for ever."

Then, when he would have embraced her again, she ran from him up the steps, and, turning round, placed her hands lightly on his shoulder.

"No, you must not follow me; you must not come in. It seems very inhospitable, but I don't want you to come into Happy-go-lucky Lodge to-night. You

must ride home now, and tell mamma and Bride. I want to give this one more evening to thinking of Anne, and living over again in my memory all the dear little odd old ways of the place. You may say what you like" (for he was beginning eagerly to interrupt her) "about wishing to keep up all the old ways, and bringing no change. I know all you will say; but it's no use. You are not Peter Lynch, and could not and should not make yourself into him, if you tried ever so; and it *will* be a new life that will have to begin here by and by. I must spend the last hours of Pelham's wedding-day in giving the old Happy-go-lucky ways a decent 'waking' all by myself."

Some summers ago a traveller in the west of Ireland, while traversing a cross-road among the Joyce Hills, not mentioned in any of the guide-books, was brought to a sudden halt by the disappearance of the horse between the shafts of the outside car on which he was riding, and his own descent upon a ridge of turf that lined the road. No one was hurt, but a wheel was off the car, and one of the shafts injured; and the driver, after spending a quarter of an hour in very vague attempts to repair the damage with a few yards of thin string that he produced from his pocket, subsided finally into scratching his head, and abusing the road that had

caused the misfortune, and himself for his presumption in venturing upon it.

"Shure," he said, "it's one of the roads that was devised and made in the famine year, and few people take the trouble to drive along it or notice it at all. Why would they? seeing it's not the way to anywhere, and there ain't many cars and horses that would have the constitution to get to the end of it, if it tuck them to the gate of heaven itself, barring the three-wheeled car that Miss O'Flaherty built, and the sacret of that died out wid other things in the times of the black throubles ye'll have heard of."

"But," remonstrated the traveller, "you assured me when I hired the car that you were perfectly well-acquainted with the road, and it was the most direct way to a gentleman's seat situated on an island in a little lake among the Joyce Hills, which would well repay the trouble of a visit."

"And why would it not repay your honour's trouble? Shure it's there before yer eyes to look at, a step or two beyant; the road's as straight as an arrow, bad luck to it, for that's the way they made all the roads in the famine time. If ye follow it on and on, ye can't fail to come in time to an opening between the hills, and ye'll see a fine gravelled path wid an iron gate at the head of it, and trees planted all up the hill-sides. If

ye turn into the path it'll take ye straight to a beautiful summer-house, a fine place wid pillars, and cushioned seats to rest in, that the gentleman that owns the Hollow now has had built in the very spot where the valley and the lake can be seen to the best advantage. Nothing could be more convanient for your honour than that the horse, poor baste, should have come down wid ye just here, for he's given ye a fine excuse and a rason for staying in the summer-house, which isn't a mile from the Lodge itself, as long as iver you plase, till I come back wid a fresh car and fetch ye away."

"You are sure that I shall need an excuse and a rason?" asked the traveller, with a curious twinkle in his eyes. "The place is not a show place, I think you said, and a stranger who presented himself without an introduction would stand a chance of being turned away from the inhospitable door. Things were different I suppose in the time of that Miss O'Flaherty you alluded to just now?"

"Yer honour'll have heard of her in foreign parts; but that's quare," glancing curiously up into the stranger's face. "She's a dale thought of in the country still; but I can't say that I remimber myself the good times before the throubles whin she reigned in the land, not being to the fore in those days. Thim that has the knowledge do say the doings then was quite beyant

anything that can be shown now—not that we've much to complain of in the jintleman that owns the Hollow, barring that he's an Englishman, and has by times notions of his own, and the lady comes of the ould stock of Dalys and O'Flahertys, and is loved and honoured far and near. If ye'd had the luck to meet her (ye'd have known her by the golden hair on her head), ye'd only have had to say that ye'd come by an accident on the bad road, and that Pater Malachy was the boy that was driving ye, and she'd have taken ye into the lodge and given ye the best intertainment, as indeed happened to a lady I was driving just to this very spot ten years ago. 'Twas on St. Peter's day by the same token that the young lady, Miss Eileen herself, was passing in the car wid her governess on the way to church, and they stopped to see if anyone was hurt, and took the strange lady back wid them to the Hollow, and she turned out to be some sort of an English relation of the master's and of his sister up at Castle Daly, and they kept her among them a month and more. Ye might have had the same luck yerself if ye'd come by this little overthrow a week ago; but now the lady's away in London, and there's nobody at the lodge to recave ye."

"You are sure of that," exclaimed the traveller, with a perceptible start and change of countenance. "You

have it on good authority that the lady is from home just now?"

"And indeed on the best, for 'twas the young lady herself tould it to me own grandmother the last time she rode up to our cabin on her pony wid a compliment of tay and shugur for the poor old cratur that has been bedridden these three years. 'Mrs. Malachy,' says she, 'it's a double quantity I've brought ye to-day, because it'll be a long time before I'll see ye again; we're going the whole of us to London,' or maybe it was Liverpool she said, 'to meet our uncle that's coming all the way from Ameriky to see us;' and they do say" (lowering his voice) "that the jintleman expected is one of thim that had to fly the counthry after the '48. God send him a safe voyage and a hearty welcome home, and the same to as many more of the loike of him as can come!"

"Your name is Malachy, I think you said," remarked the gentleman, putting his hand into his waistcoat pocket; "have you been settled in this part of the country long?"

"Since before I was born, yer honour. We came from Westport way, being starved out of our houlding in the famine; and the jintleman at the Castle put my father into a bit of a place a mile or two from here that had belonged once to a far-off cousin of our own on account of the kindness that he has to the name of Malachy.

It's a lucky name to own in these parts, I can acquaint yer honour, for the quality at the Castle and at the Hollow don't seem to know how to make enough of the five of us left to claim it. Just say up at the Lodge whin ye git there that it was young Pater Malachy, the boy wid the red hair, that druv ye and overturned ye, and there'll not be a nook or corner of the house that won't be open to yer honour to look at."

The stranger smiled, and brought a still broader smile into the face of his companion the next minute by slipping a piece of gold into his hand.

"I will walk up to the house, I think," he said, "and try the effect of your spell. You had better go back to the next cabin and get help with the car and horse, and you can bring the portmanteau up to the big house later, and I will give you directions then where to take it."

The vague phrase in the traveller's orders was interpreted liberally, and the day was a good many hours older when Peter Malachy, who had meanwhile spread abroad this new proof of the luck attending his name appeared before the iron gate with the traveller's portmanteau and hat-box on a wheelbarrow, which he proceeded to wheel leisurely along the gravelled path to the summer-house he had so minutely described. The sound of voices in conversation greeted his ear on his approach, and purely for the sake of gaining information as to the whereabouts

of the quality at the Hollow for the edification of his generous patron, Peter shoved his wheelbarrow aside among the shrubs, and creeping cautiously behind the house, put his eye to a crevice in the woodwork, and peeped in. To his surprise he discerned his late passenger engaged in eager conversation with the lady and gentleman of the house. They had their backs turned to him, and their faces to the view, but Peter had no doubt of their identity. The golden braids wound round the lady's head which her garden hat only half concealed, were enough to satisfy his mind, in spite of his late certainty of her absence in England, that the mistress of Good People's Hollow was before him. She was leaning on the arm of the strange gentleman, and Peter, crouching down and looking upwards, could see enough of his side face for a sudden flash of happy conjecture to enlighten his mind. The silky yellow beard, the merry blue eye, the broad brow, the laughing lips—how could he have sat beside them half-an-hour without arriving at the certainty that it was the mistress's brother himself he was driving to the Hollow? They were speaking loud enough for him to hear every word. He no longer had the excuse he had given himself a minute or two ago for indulging his curiosity, but it would not be mannerly to interrupt the quality in the middle of a conversation evidently so interesting—and why not, when one has the

chance, improve one's mind by hearing what they had got to say to each other?

"I am sorry you think the place so changed, Connor," the lady was saying, when Peter put his ear to the wall. "John and I flatter ourselves, that allowing for the alterations which changed circumstances and lapse of time must bring, we have been true to the spirit of the old traditions. We hope, at all events, that it is *Good* People's Hollow still."

"Yes, yes; but where *are* the people? that is what I cannot make out—to be sure I have only had a morning's experience—but though I see signs of prosperity about the place itself, and in the one or two cabins I have been in, I say again where *are* the people?"

"Ah, you may well ask that, we can't keep them from going; and now that you are here to agree with me, I will say out to John's face that it is just the one grief I have in my life. My only grief, you understand, Connor avourneen, now that I have seen you again. I get no sympathy from John. He is so convinced that the character of this part of the country needs must be changed, and that to discourage the emigration, and induce people to settle here in their former numbers, would only lead to another famine, that he cannot mourn as I do over the deserted villages and the silent hill-sides. Those who do stay are better off

than their predecessors. Peter Lynch would stare if he could look into the cabins, and about the farmsteads on the estate now—yet they go—the least sign from over the sea, a breath of invitation from the relatives, who went in the bad times, tempts them away. It is the same thing round Castle Daly, though Pelham has become a proverb for an indulgent popular landland, and has even gone in for Home Rule, much to poor old Uncle Charles's disgust; and to John's secret vexation, I fancy, between ourselves."

"Not at all," put in another voice; "it is precisely the course I foresaw Pelham would take, if Lesbia succeeded in forcing him into Parliament."

"Of course, I am not at all surprised to hear this," remarked the gentleman first addressed; "it is precisely what poor D'Arcy always prophesied. He said we should melt away like a rope of sand, if we failed to assert our nationality, at the crises of our misfortunes, when though in the extreme of suffering, the fatal remedy of disintegration was not yet established. He lived to see all his forebodings carrying themselves out, and died, poor fellow, a martyr to the foresight that would not let him encourage new ill-timed attempts."

"Of course you think as he did, I know he was your guiding star to the last; and, Connor avourneen,

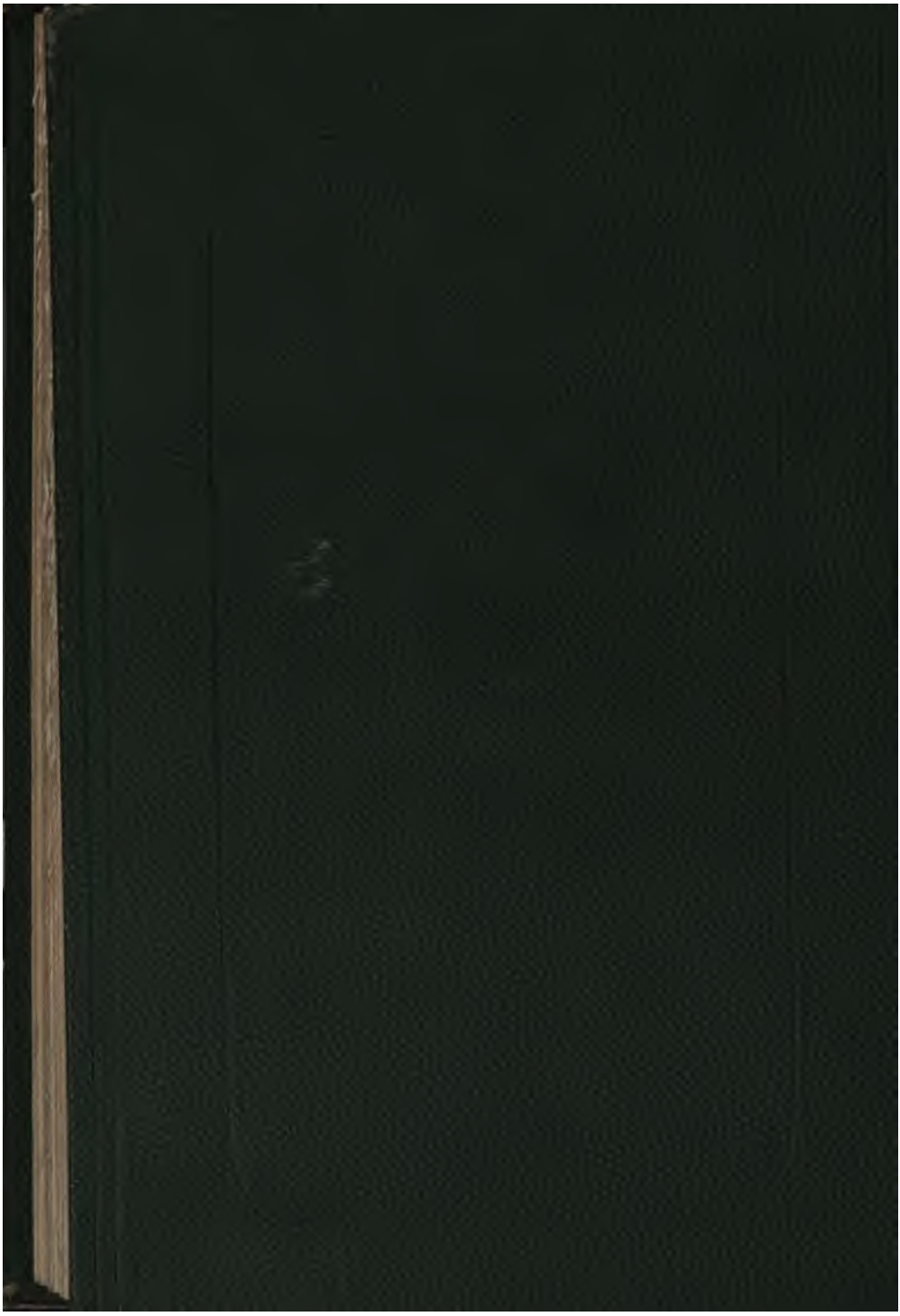
it was a ton load of apprehension taken from my heart, when I heard he had pronounced against Fenianism. I did not know that his honesty was to cost him his life. But though he despaired, and though I know no good can come of desperate remedies, I can't help having my own hopes and dreams of seeing ould Ireland triumphant even yet. Why should there not come a time of true prosperity and happiness for her at last? Why should not the thousands who go away poor and ignorant, come back, not for war, but for peace, with riches, and wisdom, and good habits gained in the land of freedom and progress? Why should they not buy back their old lands, and settle themselves again where their fathers lived, and people the Green Isle with faithful loving sons and daughters, who have her name and honour at heart, and hold them dearer than their lives? Why should not this be again sometime?"

"Sometime! Ah, but, when? Shall I tell you?

> "When backward the river Shannon flows,
> When on the salt seas blooms the rose,
> When fruit on the barren rock we find,
> Or when our rulers are just and kind."

"And that won't be in the days of Home Rule, give me leave to tell you," dryly observed the gentleman who had hitherto taken the least part in the conversation.

"Well," interrupted the lady quickly, "we won't drift into an argument this first morning; and, after all, Connor dear, it's not yourself that ought to have a word to say against the emigration; for what are you doing but giving up the old home for the new one you have made for yourself out in the far West, and for the clever little American wife that is in it? I want to hear more about her. Do you really mean to tell us that she is as pretty as Lesbia, besides being so wonderfully clever? Let us move on. Our mother and Bride are waiting at the bottom of the hill with the children, whom you scarcely saw this morning; and I want you to satisfy my mind at once, as to whether your Dermot or mine has most of the true Daly about him."

THE END.

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